

SAINT PAULS.

JUNE, 1872.

SEPTIMIUS.

A ROMANCE OF IMMORTALITY.

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

(Continued from p. 475.)

AND then Septimius toiled away again at his chemical pursuits ; tried to mingle things harmoniously, that apparently were not born to be mingled ; discovering a science for himself, and mixing it up with absurdities that other chemists had long ago flung aside ; but still there would be that turbid aspect, still that lack of fragrance, still that want of the peculiar temperature, that was announced as the test of the matter. Over and over again, he set the crystal vase in the sun, and let it stay there the appointed time, hoping that it would digest in such a manner as to bring about the desired result.

One day, as it happened, his eyes fell upon the silver key which he had taken from the breast of the dead young man, and he thought within himself that this might have something to do with the seemingly unattainable success of his pursuit. He remembered, for the first time, the grim doctor's emphatic injunction to search for the little iron-bound box of which he had spoken, and which had come down with such legends attached to it ; as, for instance, that it held the devil's bond with his great-great-grandfather, now cancelled by the surrender of the latter's soul ; that it held the golden key of Paradise ; that it was full of old gold, or of the dry leaves of a hundred years ago ; that it had a familiar friend in it, who would be exorcised by the turning of the lock, but would otherwise remain a prisoner till the solid oak of the box mouldered, or the iron rusted away ; so that between fear and the loss of the key, this curious old box had remained unopened, till itself was lost.

But now Septimius, putting together what Aunt Keziah had said in her dying moments, and what Dr. Portsoaken had insisted upon, suddenly came to the conclusion that the possession of the old iron box might be of the greatest importance to him. So he set himself

at once to think where he had last seen it. Aunt Keziah, of course, had put it away in some safe place or other, either in cellar or garret, no doubt; so Septimius, in the intervals of his other occupations, devoted several days to the search; and not to weary the reader with the particulars of the quest for an old box, suffice it to say that he at last found it, amongst various other antique rubbish, in a corner of the garret.

It was a very rusty old thing, not more than a foot in length, and half as much in height and breadth; but most ponderously iron-bound, with bars, and corners, and all sorts of fortification; looking very much like an ancient alms-box, such as are to be seen in the older rural churches of England, and which seem to intimate great distrust of those to whom the funds are committed. Indeed, there might be a shrewd suspicion that some ancient church-beadle among Septimius's forefathers, when emigrating from England, had taken the opportunity of bringing the poor's box along with him. On looking close, too, there were rude embellishments on the lid and sides of the box in long-rusted steel, designs such as the middle ages were rich in; a representation of Adam and Eve, or of Satan and a soul, nobody could tell which; but, at any rate, an illustration of great value and interest. Septimius looked at this ugly, rusty, ponderous old box, so worn and battered with time, and recollected with a scornful smile the legends of which it was the object; all of which he despised and discredited, just as much as he did that story in the "Arabian Nights," where a demon comes out of a copper vase, in a cloud of smoke that covers the sea-shore; for he was singularly invulnerable to all modes of superstition, all nonsense, except his own. But that one mode was ever in full force and operation with him. He felt strongly convinced that inside the old box was something that appertained to his destiny; the key that he had taken from the dead man's breast, had that come down through time, and across the sea, and had a man died to bring and deliver it to him, merely for nothing? It could not be.

He looked at the old, rusty, elaborated lock of the little receptacle. It was much flourished about with what was once polished steel; and certainly, when thus polished, and the steel bright with which it was hooped, defended, and inlaid, it must have been a thing fit to appear in any cabinet; though now the oak was worm-eaten as an old coffin, and the rust of the iron came off red on Septimius's fingers, after he had been fumbling at it. He looked at the curious old silver key too, and fancied that he discovered in its elaborate handle some likeness to the ornaments about the box; at any rate, this he determined was the key of fate, and he was just applying it to the lock, when somebody tapped familiarly at the door, having opened the outer one, and stepped in with a manly stride. Septimius, inwardly blaspheming, as secluded men are apt to do when any

interruption comes, and especially when it comes at some critical moment of projection, left the box as yet unbroke, and said, "Come in."

The door opened, and Robert Hagburn entered; looking so tall and stately, that Septimius hardly knew him for the youth with whom he had grown up familiarly. He had on the revolutionary dress of buff and blue, with decorations that to the initiated eye denoted him an officer, and certainly there was a kind of authority in his look and manner, indicating that heavy responsibilities, critical moments had educated him, and turned the plough-boy into a man.

"Is it you?" exclaimed Septimius. "I scarcely knew you. How war has altered you!"

"And I may say, Is it you? for you are much altered likewise, my old friend. Study wears upon you terribly. You will be an old man, at this rate, before you know you are a young one. You will kill yourself, as sure as a gun!"

"Do you think so?" said Septimius, rather startled, for the queer absurdity of the position struck him, if he should so exhaust and wear himself as to die, just at the moment when he should have found out the secret of everlasting life. "But though I look pale, I am very vigorous. Judging from that scar, slanting down from your temple, you have been nearer death than you now think me, though in another way."

"Yes," said Robert Hagburn; "but in hot blood, and for a good cause, who cares for death? And yet I love life; none better, while it lasts, and I love it in all its looks, and turns, and surprises;—there is so much to be got out of it, in spite of all that people say. Youth is sweet, with its fiery enterprise, and I suppose mature manhood will be just as much so, though in a calmer way; and age, quieter still, will have its own merits;—the thing is only to do with life what we ought, and what is suited to each of its stages; do all, enjoy all;—and I suppose these two rules amount to the same thing. Only catch real, earnest hold of life—not play with it, and not defer one part of it for the sake of another—then each part of life will do for us what was intended. People talk of the hardships of military service; of the miseries that we undergo fighting for our country. I have undergone my share, I believe—hard toil in the wilderness, hunger, extreme weariness, pinching cold, the torture of a wound, peril of death; and really I have been as happy through it as ever I was at my mother's cosy fire-side of a winter's evening. If I had died, I doubt not my last moments would have been happy. There is no use of life, but just to find out what is fit for us to do; and, doing it, it seems to be little matter whether we live or die in it. God does not want our work, but only our willingness to work;—at least, the last seems to answer all His purposes."

"This is a comfortable philosophy of yours," said Septimius, rather

contemptuously, and yet enviously. "Where did you get it, Robert?"

"Where? Nowhere; it came to me on the march; and though I can't say that I thought it when the bullets pattered into the snow about me, in those narrow streets of Quebec, yet, I suppose, it was in my mind then; for, as I tell you, I was very cheerful and contented. And, you, Septimius? I never saw such a discontented, unhappy-looking fellow as you are. You have had a harder time in peace than I in war. You have not found what you seek, whatever that may be. Take my advice. Give yourself to the next work that comes to hand. The war offers place to all of us; we ought to be thankful—the most joyous of all the generations before or after us—since Providence gives us such good work to live for, or such a good opportunity to die. It is worth living for, just to have the chance to die so well as a man may in these days. Come, be a soldier. Be a chaplain, since your education lies that way; and you will find that nobody in peace prays so well as we do, we soldiers; and you shall not be debarred from fighting, too; if war is holy work, a priest may lawfully do it, as well as pray for it. Come with us, my old friend Septimius, be my comrade, and, whether you live or die, you will thank me for getting you out of the yellow forlornness in which you go on, neither living nor dying."

Septimius looked at Robert Hagburn in surprise; so much was he altered and improved by this brief experience of war, adventure, responsibility, which he had passed through. Not less than the effect produced on his loutish, rustic air and deportment, developing his figure, seeming to make him taller, setting free the manly graces that lurked within his awkward frame. Not less was the effect on his mind and moral nature, giving freedom of ideas, simple perception of great thoughts, a free natural chivalry; so that the knight, the Homeric warrior, the hero, seemed to be here, or possible to be here, in the young New England rustic; and all that history has given, and hearts throbbed, and sighed, and gloried over, of patriotism, and heroic feeling and action, might be repeated, perhaps, in the life and death of this familiar friend and playmate of his, whom he had valued not over highly—Robert Hagburn. He had merely followed out his natural heart, boldly and singly—doing the first good thing that came to hand—and here was a hero.

"You almost make me envy you, Robert," said he, sighing.

"Then why not come with me?" asked Robert.

"Because I have another destiny," said Septimius.

"Well, you are mistaken; be sure of that," said Robert. "This is not a generation for study, and the making of books; that may come by-and-by. This great fight has need of all men to carry it on, in one way or another; and no man will do well, even for himself, who tries to avoid his share in it. But I have said my say. And now,

Septimius, the war takes much of a man, but it does not take him all, and what it leaves is all the more full of life and health thereby. I have something to say to you about this."

"Say it then, Robert," said Septimius, who having got over the first excitement of the interview, and the sort of exhilaration produced by the healthful glow of Robert's spirit, began secretly to wish that it might close, and to be permitted to return to his solitary thoughts again. "What can I do for you?"

"Why, nothing," said Robert, looking rather confused, "since all is settled. The fact is, my old friend, as perhaps you have seen, I have very long had an eye upon your sister Rose; yes, from the time we went together to the old school-house, where she now teaches children like what we were then. The war took me away, and in good time, for I doubt if Rose would ever have cared enough for me to be my wife, if I had stayed at home, a country lout, as I was getting to be, in shirt-sleeves and bare feet. But now, you see, I have come back, and this whole great war, to her woman's heart, is represented in me, and makes me heroic, so to speak, and strange, and yet her old familiar lover. So I found her heart tenderer for me than it was; and, in short, Rose has consented to be my wife, and we mean to be married in a week; my furlough permits little delay.

"You surprise me," said Septimius, who, immersed in his own pursuits, had taken no notice of the growing affection between Robert and his sister. "Do you think it well to snatch this little lull that is allowed you in the wild striving of war to try to make a peaceful home? Shall you like to be summoned from it soon? Shall you be as cheerful among dangers afterwards, when one sword may cut down two happinesses?"

"There is something in what you say, and I have thought of it," said Robert, sighing. "But I can't tell how it is; but there is something in this uncertainty, this peril, this cloud before us, that makes it sweeter to love and to be loved than amid all seeming quiet and serenity. Really, I think, if there were to be no death, the beauty of life would be all tame. So we take our chance, or our dispensation of Providence, and are going to love, and to be married, just as confidently as if we were sure of living for ever."

"Well, old fellow," said Septimius, with more cordiality and out-gush of heart than he had felt for a long while, "there is no man whom I should be happier to call brother. Take Rose, and all happiness along with her. She is a good girl, and not in the least like me. May you live out your threescore years and ten, and every one of them be happy."

Little more passed, and Robert Hagburn took his leave with a hearty shake of Septimius's hand, too conscious of his own happiness to be quite sensible how much the latter was self-involved, strange,

anxious, separated from healthy life and interests ; and Septimius, as soon as Robert had disappeared, locked the door behind him, and proceeded at once to apply the silver key to the lock of the old strong box.

The lock resisted somewhat, being rusty, as might well be supposed after so many years since it was opened ; but it finally allowed the key to turn, and Septimius, with a good deal of flutter at his heart, opened the lid. The interior had a very different aspect from the exterior ; for, whereas the latter looked so old, this, having been kept from the air, looked about as new as when shut up from light and air two centuries ago, less or more. It was lined with ivory, beautifully carved in figures, according to the art which the mediæval people possessed in great perfection ; and probably the box had been a lady's jewel casket formerly, and had glowed with rich lustre and bright colours at former openings. But now there was nothing in it of that kind—nothing in keeping with those figures carved in the ivory representing some mythical subjects—nothing but some papers in the bottom of the box written over in an ancient hand, which Septimius at once fancied that he recognised as that of the manuscript and recipe which he had found on the breast of the young soldier. He eagerly seized them, but was infinitely disappointed to find that they did not seem to refer at all to the subjects treated by the former, but related to pedigrees and genealogies, and were in reference to an English family and some member of it who, two centuries before, had crossed the sea to America, and who, in this way, had sought to preserve his connection with his native stock, so as to be able, perhaps, to prove it for himself or his descendants ; and there was reference to documents and records in England in confirmation of the genealogy. Septimius saw that this paper had been drawn up by an ancestor of his own, the unfortunate man who had been hanged for withcraft ; but so earnest had been his expectation of something different, that he flung the old papers down with bitter indifference.

Then again he snatched them up, and contemptuously read them—those proofs of descent through generations of esquires and knights, who had been renowned in war ; and there seemed, too, to be running through the family a certain tendency to letters, for three were designated as of the colleges of Oxford or Cambridge ; and against one there was the note, "he that sold himself to Sathan ;" and another seemed to have been a follower of Wickliffe ; and they had murdered kings, and been beheaded, and banished, and what not ; so that the age-long life of this ancient family had not been after all a happy or very prosperous one, though they had kept their estate, in one or another descendant, since the Conquest. It was not wholly without interest that Septimius saw that this ancient descent, this connection with noble families, and intermarriages with names, some

of which he recognised as known in English history, all referred to his own family, and seemed to centre in himself, the last of a poverty-stricken line, which had dwindled down into obscurity, and into rustic labour and humble toil, reviving in him a little; yet how little, unless he fulfilled his strange purpose. Was it not better worth his while to take this English position here so strangely offered him? He had apparently slain unwittingly the only person who could have contested his rights—the young man who had so strangely brought him the hope of unlimited life at the same time that he was making room for him among his forefathers. What a change in his lot would have been here, for there seemed to be some pretensions to a title, too, from a barony which was floating about and occasionally moving out of abeyancy.

"Perhaps," said Septimius to himself, "I may hereafter think it worth while to assert my claim to these possessions, to this position amid an ancient aristocracy, and try that mode of life for one generation. Yet there is something in my destiny incompatible, of course, with the continued possession of an estate. I must be, of necessity, a wanderer on the face of the earth, changing place at short intervals, disappearing suddenly and entirely; else the foolish, short-lived multitude and mob of mortals will be enraged with one who seems their brother, yet whose countenance will never be furrowed with his age, nor his knees totter, nor his force be abated; their little brevity will be rebuked by his age-long endurance, above whom the oaken roof-tree of a thousand years would crumble, while still he would be hale and strong. So that this house, or any other, would be but a resting-place of a day, and then I must away into another obscurity."

With almost a regret, he continued to look over the documents until he reached one of the persons recorded in the line of pedigree—a worthy, apparently, of the reign of Elizabeth, to whom was attributed a title of Doctor in Utriusque Juris; and against his name was a verse of Latin written, for what purpose Septimius knew not, for on reading it it appeared to have no discoverable appropriateness; but suddenly he remembered the blotted and imperfect hieroglyphical passage in the recipe. He thought an instant, and was convinced this was the full expression and outwriting of that crabbed little mystery; and that here was part of that secret writing for which, as my poor friend Miss Bacon discovered to her cost, the Age of Elizabeth was so famous and so dexterous. His mind had a flash of light upon it, and from that moment he was enabled to read not only the recipe but the rules, and all the rest of that mysterious document, in a way which he had never thought of before, to discern that it was not to be taken literally and simply, but had a hidden process involved in it that made the whole thing infinitely deeper than he had hitherto deemed it to be. His brain reeled, he seemed to have taken a draught of some liquor that opened infinite depths before him, he

could scarcely refrain from giving a shout of triumphant exultation, the house could not contain him, he rushed up to his hill-top, and there, after walking swiftly to and fro, at length flung himself on the little hillock, and burst forth, as if addressing him who slept beneath—

"Oh brother, oh friend!" said he, "I thank thee for thy matchless beneficence to me; for all which I rewarded thee with this little spot on my hill-top. Thou wast very good, very kind. It would not have been well for thee, a youth of fiery joys and passions, loving to laugh, loving the lightness and sparkling brilliancy of life, to take this boon to thyself; for oh, brother! I see, I see, it requires a strong spirit, capable of much lonely endurance, able to be sufficient to itself, loving not too much, dependant on no sweet ties of affection, to be capable of the mighty trial which now devolves on me. I thank thee, oh kinsman! Yet thou, I feel, hast the better part, who didst so soon lie down to rest, who hast done for ever with this troublesome world, which it is mine to contemplate from age to age, and to sum up the meaning of it. Thou art disporting thyself in other spheres. I enjoy the high, severe, fearful office of living here, and of being the minister of Providence from one age to many successive ones."

In this manner he raved, as never before, in a strain of exalted enthusiasm, securely treading on air, and sometimes stopping to shout aloud, and feeling as if he should burst if he did not do so; and his voice came back to him again from the low hills on the other side of the broad, level valley, and out of the woods afar, mocking him; or as if it were airy spirits, that knew how it was all to be, confirming his cry, saying, "It shall be so," "Thou hast found it at last," "Thou art immortal." And it seemed as if nature were inclined to celebrate his triumph over herself; for above the woods that crowned the hill to the northward, there were shoots and streams of radiance, a white, a red, a many-coloured lustre, blazing up high towards the zenith, dancing up, flitting down, dancing up again; so that it seemed as if spirits were keeping a revel there. The leaves of the trees on the hill-side, all except the evergreens, had now mostly fallen with the autumn; so that Septimius was seen by the few passers-by, in the decline of the afternoon, passing to and fro along his path, wildly gesticulating; and heard to shout, so that the echoes came from all directions to answer him. After nightfall, too, in the harvest moon-light, a shadow was still seen passing there, waving its arms in shadowy triumph; so, the next day, there were various goodly stories afloat and astir, coming out of successive mouths, more wondrous at each birth; the simplest form of the story being, that Septimius Felton had at last gone raving mad on the hill-top that he was so fond of haunting; and those who listened to his shrieks said that he was calling to the devil; and some said that by certain exorcisms he had caused the appearance of a battle in the air, charging squadrons,

cannon-flashes, champions encountering, all of which foreboded some real battle to be fought with the enemies of the country ; and as the battle of Monmouth chanced to occur, either the very next day, or about that time, this was supposed to be either caused or foretold by Septimius's eccentricities ; and as the battle was not very favourable to our arms, the patriotism of Septimius suffered much in popular estimation.

But he knew nothing, thought nothing, cared nothing about his country, or his country's battles ; he was as sane as he had been for a year past, and was wise enough, though merely by instinct, to throw off some of his superfluous excitement by these wild gestures, with wild shouts, and restless activity ; and when he had partly accomplished this he returned to the house, and, late as it was, kindled his fire, and began anew the processes of chemistry, now enlightened by the late teachings. A new agent seemed to him to mix itself up with his toil, and to forward his purpose ; something helped him along, everything became facile to his manipulation, clear to his thought. In this way he spent the night, and when at sunrise he let in the eastern light upon his study, the thing was done.

Septimius had achieved it. That is to say, he had succeeded in amalgamating his materials so that they acted upon one another, and in accordance ; and had produced a result that had a subsistence in itself, and a right to be ; a something potent and substantial, each ingredient contributing its part to form a new essence, which was as real and individual as anything it was formed from. But in order to perfect it, there was necessary that the powers of nature should act quietly upon it through a month of sunshine ; that the moon, too, should have its part in the production ; and so he must wait patiently for this. Wait ! surely he would ! Had he not time for waiting ? Were he to wait till old age it would not be too much ; for all future time would have it in charge to repay him.

So he poured the inestimable liquor into a glass vase, well secured from the air, and placed it in the sunshine, shifting it from one sunny window to another, in order that it might ripen ; moving it gently lest he should disturb the living spirit that he knew to be in it. And he watched it from day to day, watched the reflections in it, watched its lustre, which seemed to him to grow greater day by day, as if it imbibed the sunlight into it. Never was there anything so bright as this. It changed its hue, too, gradually, being now a rich purple, now a crimson, now a violet, now a blue ; going through all these prismatic colours without losing any of its brilliance, and never was there such a hue as the sunlight took in falling through it and resting on his floor. And strange and beautiful it was, too, to look through this medium at the outer world, and see how it was glorified and made anew, and did not look like the same world, although there were all its familiar marks. And then, past his window, seen through

this, went the farmer and his wife, on saddle and pillion, jogging to meeting-house or market; and the very dog, the cow coming home from pasture, the old familiar faces of his childhood, looked differently. And so at last, at the end of the month, it settled into a most deep and brilliant crimson, as if it were the essence of the blood of the young man whom he had slain. The flower being now triumphant, it had given its own hue to the whole mass, and had grown brighter every day; so that it seemed to have inherent light, as if it were a planet by itself, a heart of crimson fire burning within it.

And when this had been done, and there was no more change, showing that the digestion was perfect, then he took it and placed it where the changing moon would fall upon it; and then again he watched it, covering it in darkness by day, revealing it to the moon by night; and watching it here, too, through more changes. And by-and-by he perceived that the deep crimson hue was departing—not fading; we cannot say that, because of the prodigious lustre which still pervaded it, and was not less strong than ever, but certainly the hue became fainter, now a rose-colour, now fainter, fainter still, till there was only left the purest whiteness of the moon itself; a change that somewhat disappointed and grieved Septimius, though still it seemed fit that the water of life should be of no one richness, because it must combine all. As the absorbed young man gazed through the lonely nights at his beloved liquor, he fancied sometimes that he could see wonderful things in the crystal sphere of the vase, as in Doctor Dee's magic crystal used to be seen, which now lies in the British Museum, representations, it might be, of things in the far past, or in the further future, scenes in which he himself was to act, persons yet unborn, the beautiful and the wise, with whom he was to be associated, palaces and towers, modes of hitherto unseen architecture, that old hall in England to which he had a hereditary right, with its gables, and its smooth lawn; the witch-meetings in which his ancestor used to take part; Aunt Keziah on her death-bed; and, flitting through all, the shade of Sibyl Dacy, eyeing him from secret nooks, or some remoteness, with her peculiar mischievous smile, beckoning him into the sphere. All such visions would he see, and then become aware that he had been in a dream, superinduced by too much watching, too intent thought; so that living among so many dreams, he was almost afraid that he should find himself waking out of yet another, and find that the vase itself and the liquid it contained were also dream-stuff. But no, these were real.

There was one change that surprised him, although he accepted it without doubt, and, indeed, it did imply a wonderful efficacy, at least singularity, in the newly-converted liquid. It grew strangely cool in temperature in the latter part of his watching it. It appeared to imbibe its coldness from the cold, chaste moon, until it seemed to Septimius that it was colder than ice itself; the mist gathered upon

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the crystal vase as upon a tumbler of iced-water in a warm room. Some say it actually gathered thick with frost, crystallised into a thousand fantastic and beautiful shapes, but this I do not know so well. Only it was very cold. Septimius pondered upon it, and thought he saw that life itself was cold, individual in its being, a high, pure essence, chastened from all heats; cold, therefore, and therefore invigorating.

Thus much, inquiring deeply, and with painful research into the liquid which Septimius concocted, have I been able to learn about it—its aspect, its properties; and now I suppose it to be quite perfect, and that nothing remains but to put it to such use as he had so long been labouring for. But this, somehow or other, he found in himself a strong reluctance to do; he paused, as it were, at the point where his pathway separated itself from that of other men, and meditated whether it were worth while to give up everything that Providence had provided, and take instead only his lonely gift of immortal life. Not that he ever really had any doubt about it; no, indeed, but it was his security, his consciousness that he held the bright sphere of all futurity in his hand, that made him dally a little, now that he could quaff immortality as soon as he liked.

Besides, now that he looked forward from the verge of mortal destiny, the path before him seemed so very lonely. Might he not seek some one own friend—one single heart—before he took the final step? There was Sibyl Dacy! Oh! what bliss, if that pale girl might set out with him on his journey! how sweet, how sweet, to wander with her through the places else so desolate! for he could but half see, half know things, without her to help him. And perhaps it might be so. She must already know, or strongly suspect, that he was engaged in some deep, mysterious research; it might be that, with her sources of mysterious knowledge among her legendary lore, she knew of this. Then, oh, to think of those dreams which lovers have always had, when their new love makes the old earth seem so happy and glorious a place, that not a thousand, nor an endless succession of years can exhaust it—all those realised for him and her! If this could not be, what should he do? Would he venture onward into such a wintry futurity, symbolised, perhaps, by the coldness of the crystal goblet? He shivered at the thought.

Now, what had passed between Septimius and Sibyl Dacy is not upon record, only that one day they were walking together on the hill-top, or sitting by the little hillock, and talking earnestly together. Sibyl's face was a little flushed with some excitement, and really she looked very beautiful; and Septimius's dark face, too, had a solemn triumph in it that made him also beautiful; so wrapt he was after all those watchings and emaciations, and the pure, unworldly, self-denying life that he had spent. They talked as if there were some foregone conclusion on which they based what they said.

"Will you not be weary in the time that we shall spend together?" asked he.

"Oh no," said Sibyl, smiling; "I am sure that it will be very full of enjoyment."

"Yes," said Septimius, "though now I must remould my anticipations; for I have only dared, hitherto, to map out a solitary existence."

"And how did you do that?" asked Sibyl.

"Oh! there is nothing that would come amiss," answered Septimius; "for, truly, as I have lived apart from men, yet it is really not because I have no taste for whatever humanity includes, but I would fain, if I might, live everybody's life at once, or, since that may not be, each in succession. I would try the life of power, ruling men; but that might come later, after I had had long experience of men, and had lived through much history, and had seen, as a disinterested observer, how men might best be influenced for their own good. I would be a great traveller at first; and as a man newly coming into possession of an estate goes over it, and views each separate field and wood-lot, and whatever features it contains, so will I, whose the world is, because I possess it for ever; whereas all others are but transitory guests. So will I wander over this world of mine, and be acquainted with all its shores, seas, rivers, mountains, fields, and the various peoples who inhabit them, and to whom it is my purpose to be a benefactor; for think not, dear Sibyl, that I suppose this great lot of mine to have devolved upon me without great duties—heavy and difficult to fulfil, though glorious in their adequate fulfilment. But for all this there will be time. In a century, I shall partially have seen this earth, and known at least its boundaries—have gotten for myself the outline, to be filled up hereafter."

"And I, too," said Sibyl, "will have my duties and labours; for while you are wandering about among men, I will go among women, and observe and converse with them, from the princess to the peasant girl; and will find out what is the matter, that woman gets so large a share of human misery laid on her weak shoulders. I will see why it is that, whether she be a royal princess, she has to be sacrificed to matters of state, or a cottage girl, still somehow the thing not fit for her is done; and whether there is or no some deadly curse on woman, so that she has nothing to do, and nothing to enjoy, but only to be wronged by man, and still to love him, and despise herself for it;—to be shaky in her revenges. And then if, after all this investigation, it turns out—as I suspect—that woman is not capable of being helped, that there is something inherent in herself that makes it hopeless to struggle for her redemption, then what shall I do? Nay, I know not, unless to preach to the sisterhood that they all kill their female children as fast as they are born, and then let the generations of men manage as they can! Woman, so feeble and crazy in

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body, fair enough sometimes, but full of infirmities ; not strong, with nerves prone to every pain ; ailing, full of little weaknesses, more contemptible than great ones ! ”

“ That would be a dreary end, Sibyl,” said Septimius. “ But I trust that we shall be able to hush up this weary and perpetual wail of womankind on easier terms than that. Well, dearest Sibyl, after we have spent a hundred years in examining into the real state of mankind, and another century in devising and putting in execution remedies for his ills, until our maturer thought has time to perfect his cure, we shall then have earned a little play-time—a century of pastime, in which we will search out whatever joy can be had by thoughtful people, and that child-like sportiveness which comes out of growing wisdom, and enjoyment of every kind. We will gather about us everything beautiful and stately, a great palace, for we shall then be so experienced that all riches will be easy for us to get ; with rich furniture, pictures, statues, and all royal ornaments ; and side by side with this life we will have a little cottage, and see which is the happiest, for this has always been a dispute. For this century we will neither toil nor spin, nor think of anything beyond the day that is passing over us. There is time enough to do all that we have to do.”

“ A hundred years of play ! Will not that be tiresome ? ” said Sibyl.

“ If it is,” said Septimius, “ the next century shall make up for it ; for then we will contrive deep philosophies, take up one theory after another, and find out its hollowness and inadequacy, and fling it aside, the rotten rubbish that they all are, until we have strewn the whole realm of human thought with the broken fragments, all smashed up. And then, on this great mound of broken potsherds (like that great Monte Testaccio, which we will go to Rome to see), we will build a system that shall stand, and by which mankind shall look far into the ways of Providence, and find practical uses of the deepest kind in what it has thought merely speculation. And then, when the hundred years are over, and this great work done, we will still be so free in mind, that we shall see the emptiness of our own theory, though men see only its truth. And so, if we like more of this pastime, then shall another and another century, and as many more as we like, be spent in the same way.”

“ And after that another play-day ? ” asked Sibyl Dacy.

“ Yes,” said Septimius, “ only it shall not be called so ; for the next century we will get ourselves made rulers of the earth ; and knowing men so well, and having so wrought our theories of government and what not, we will proceed to execute them—which will be as easy to us as a child’s arrangement of its dolls. We will smile superior, to see what a facile thing it is to make a people happy. In our reign of a hundred years, we shall have time to extinguish errors, and make

the world see the absurdity of them ; to substitute other methods of government for the old, bad ones ; to fit the people to govern itself, to do with little government, to do with none ; and when this is effected, we will vanish from our loving people, and be seen no more, but be revered as gods—we, meanwhile, being overlooked, and smiling to ourselves, amid the very crowd that is looking for us."

"I intend," said Sibyl, making this wild talk wilder by that petulance which she so often showed, "I intend to introduce a new fashion of dress when I am queen, and that shall be my part of the great reform which you are going to make. And for my crown, I intend to have it of flowers, in which that strange crimson one shall be the chief ; and when I vanish, this flower shall remain behind, and perhaps they shall have a glimpse of me wearing it in the crowd. Well, what next ?"

"After this," said Septimius, "having seen so much of affairs, and having lived so many hundred years, I will sit down and write a history, such as histories ought to be, and never have been. And it shall be so wise, and so vivid, and so self-evidently true, that people shall be convinced from it that there is some undying one among them, because only an eyewitness could have written it, or could have gained so much wisdom as was needful for it."

"And for my part in the history," said Sibyl, "I will record the various lengths of women's waists, and the fashion of their sleeves. What next ?"

"By this time," said Septimius,—"how many hundred years have we now lived ?—by this time, I shall have pretty well prepared myself for what I have been contemplating from the first. I will become a religious teacher, and promulgate a faith, and prove it by prophecies and miracles ; for my long experience will enable me to do the first, and the acquaintance which I will have formed with the mysteries of science will put the latter at my fingers' ends. So I will be a prophet, a greater than Mahomet, and will put all man's hopes into my doctrine, and make him good, holy, happy ; and he shall put up his prayers to his Creator, and find them answered, because they shall be wise, and accompanied with effort. This will be a great work, and may earn me another rest and pastime."

[He would see, in one age, the column raised in memory of some great deed of his in a former one.]

"And what shall that be ?" asked Sibyl Dacy.

"Why," said Septimius, looking askance at her, and speaking with a certain hesitation, "I have learned, Sibyl, that it is a weary toil for a man to be always good, holy, and upright. In my life as a sainted prophet, I shall have somewhat too much of this ; it will be enervating and sickening, and I shall need another kind of diet. So—in the next hundred years, Sibyl—in that one little century—methinks I would be what men call wicked. How can I know my brethren,

unless I do that once? I would experience all. Imagination is only a dream. I can imagine myself a murderer, and all other modes of crime; but it leaves no real impression on the heart. I must live these things."

[The rampant unrestraint, which is the characteristic of wickedness.]

"Good," said Sibyl quietly; "and I too."

"And thou too!" exclaimed Septimius. "Not so, Sibyl. I would reserve thee good and pure, so that there may be to me the means of redemption—some stable hold in the moral confusion that I will create around myself, whereby I shall by-and-by get back into order, virtue, and religion. Else all is lost, and I may become a devil, and make my own hell around me; so, Sibyl, do thou be good for ever, and not fall nor slip a moment. Promise me!"

"We will consider about that in some other century," replied Sibyl composedly. "There is time enough yet. What next?"

"Nay, this is enough for the present," said Septimius. "New vistas will open themselves before us continually, as we go onward. How idle to think that one little lifetime would exhaust the world! After hundreds of centuries, I feel as if we might still be on the threshold. There is the material world, for instance, to perfect; to draw out the powers of nature, so that man shall, as it were, give life to all modes of matter, and make them his ministering servants. Swift ways of travel, by earth, sea, and air; machines for doing whatever the hand of man now does, so that we shall do all but put souls into our wheel-work and watch-work; the modes of making night into day; of getting control over the weather and the seasons; the virtues of plants;—these are some of the easier things thou shalt help me do."

"I have no taste for that," said Sibyl, "unless I could make an embroidery worked of steel."

"And so, Sibyl," continued Septimius, pursuing his strain of solemn enthusiasm, intermingled as it was with wild, excursive vagaries, "we will go on as many centuries as we choose. Perhaps—yet I think not so—perhaps, however, in the course of lengthened time, we may find that the world is the same always, and mankind the same, and all possibilities of human fortune the same; so that by-and-by we shall discover that the same old scenery serves the world's stage in all ages, and that the story is always the same; yes, and the actors always the same, though none but we can be aware of it; and that the actors and spectators would grow weary of it, were they not bathed in forgetful sleep, and so think themselves new made in each successive lifetime. We may find that the stuff of the world's drama, and the passions which seem to play in it, have a monotony, when once we have tried them; that in only once trying them, and viewing them, we find out their secret, and that afterwards the show is too superficial to arrest our attention. As dramatists and novelists repeat their plots, so does

man's life repeat itself, and at length grows stale. This is what, in my desponding moments, I have sometimes suspected. What to do, if this be so?"

"Nay, that is a serious consideration," replied Sibyl, assuming an air of mock alarm, "if you really think we shall be tired of life, whether or no."

"I do not think it, Sibyl," replied Septimius. "By much musing on this matter, I have convinced myself that man is not capable of debarring himself utterly from death, since it is evidently a remedy for many evils that nothing else would cure. This means that we have discovered of removing death to an indefinite distance, is not supernatural; on the contrary, it is the most natural thing in the world—the very perfection of the natural, since it consists in applying the powers and processes of nature to the prolongation of the existence of man, her most perfect handiwork; and this could only be done by entire accordance and co-effort with nature. Therefore nature is not changed, and death remains as one of her steps, just as heretofore. Therefore, when we have exhausted the world, whether by going through its apparently vast variety, or by satisfying ourselves that it is all a repetition of one thing, we will call death as the friend to introduce us to something new."

[He would write a poem, or other great work, inappreciable at first, and live to see it famous—himself among his own posterity.]

"Oh, insatiable love of life!" exclaimed Sibyl, looking at him with strange pity. "Canst thou not conceive that mortal brain and heart might at length be content to sleep?"

"Never, Sibyl!" replied Septimius, with horror. "My spirit delights in the thought of an infinite eternity. Does not thine?"

"One little interval—a few centuries only—of dreamless sleep," said Sibyl, pleadingly. "Cannot you allow me that?"

"I fear," said Septimius, "our identity would change in that repose; it would be a Lethe between the two parts of our being, and with such disconnection a continued life would be equivalent to a new one, and therefore valueless."

In such talk, snatching in the fog at the fragments of philosophy, they continued fitfully; Septimius calming down his enthusiasm thus, which otherwise might have burst forth in madness, affrighting the quiet little village with the marvellous things about which they mused. Septimius could not quite satisfy himself whether Sibyl Dacy shared in his belief of the success of his experiment, and was confident, as he was, that he held in his control the means of unlimited life; neither was he sure that she loved him—loved him well enough to undertake with him the long march that he propounded her, making a union an affair of so vastly more importance than it is in the brief lifetime of other mortals. But he determined to let her drink the invaluable draught along with him, and to trust to the long future, and the

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better opportunities that time would give him, and his outliving all rivals, and the loneliness which an undying life would throw around her, without him, as the pledges of his success.

And now the happy day had come for the celebration of Robert Hagburn's marriage with pretty Rose Garfield; the brave with the fair; and, as usual, the ceremony was to take place in the evening, and at the house of the bride; and preparations were made accordingly—the wedding-cake, which the bride's own fair hands had mingled with her tender hopes, and seasoned it with maiden fears, so that its composition was as much ethereal as sensual; and the neighbours and friends were invited, and came with their best wishes and goodwill. For Rose shared not all the distrust, the suspicion, or whatever it was, that had waited on the true branch of Septimius's family, in one shape or another, ever since the memory of man; and all—except, it might be, some disappointed damsels who had hoped to win Robert Hagburn for themselves—rejoiced at the approaching union of this fit couple, and wished them happiness.

Septimius, too, accorded his gracious consent to the union, and while he thought within himself that such a brief union was not worth the trouble and feeling which his sister and her lover wasted on it, still he wished them happiness. As he compared their brevity with his long duration, he smiled at their little fancies of loves, of which he seemed to see the end; the flower of a brief summer, blooming beautifully enough, and shedding its leaves, the fragrance of which would linger a little while in his memory, and then be gone. He wondered how far in the coming centuries he should remember this wedding of his sister Rose; perhaps he would meet, five hundred years hence, some descendant of the marriage; a fair girl, bearing the traits of his sister's fresh beauty; a young man, recalling the strength and manly comeliness of Robert Hagburn; and could claim acquaintance and kindred. He would be the guardian, from generation to generation, of this race; their ever-reappearing friend at times of need; and meeting them from age to age, would find traditions of himself, growing poetical in the lapse of time; so that he would smile at seeing his features look so much more majestic in their fancies than in reality. So all along their course, in the history of the family, he would trace himself, and by his traditions he would make them acquainted with all their ancestors, and so still be warmed by kindred blood.

And Robert Hagburn, full of the life of the moment, warm with generous blood, came in a new uniform, looking fit to be the founder of a race who should look back to a hero sire. He greeted Septimius as a brother. The minister, too, came, of course, and mingled with the throng, with decorous aspect, and greeted Septimius with more formality than he had been wont; for Septimius had insensibly with-

drawn himself from the minister's intimacy, as he got deeper and deeper into the enthusiasm of his own cause. Besides, the minister did not fail to see that his once-devoted scholar had contracted habits of study into the secrets of which he himself was not admitted, and that he no longer alluded to studies for the ministry; and he was inclined to suspect that Septimius had unfortunately allowed infidel ideas to assail at least, if not to overcome, that fortress of firm faith which he had striven to found and strengthen in his mind; a misfortune frequently befalling speculative and imaginative and melancholic persons, like Septimius, whom the devil is all the time planning to assault, because he feels confident of having a traitor in the garrison. The minister had heard that this was the fashion of Septimius's family, and that even the famous divine, who, in his eyes, was the glory of it, had had his season of wild infidelity in his youth, before grace touched him; and had always thereafter, throughout his long and pious life, been subject to seasons of black and sulphurous despondency, during which he disbelieved the faith, which, at other times, he preached so powerfully.

"Septimius, my young friend," said he, "are you yet ready to be a preacher of the truth?"

"Not yet, reverend pastor," said Septimius, smiling at the thought of the day before, that the career of a prophet would be one that he should some time assume. "There will be time enough to preach the truth when I better know it."

"You do not look as if you knew it so well as formerly, instead of better," said his reverend friend, looking into the deep furrows of his brow, and into his wild and troubled eyes.

"Perhaps not," said Septimius. "There is time yet."

These few words passed amid the bustle and murmur of the evening, while the guests were assembling, and all were awaiting the marriage with that interest which the event continually brings with it, common as it is, so that nothing but death is commoner. Everybody congratulated the modest Rose, who looked quiet and happy; and so she stood up at the proper time, and the minister married them with a certain fervour and individual application, that made them feel they were married indeed. Then there ensued a salutation of the bride, the first to kiss her being the minister, and then some respectable old justices and farmers, each with his friendly smile and joke. Then went round the cake and wine, and other good cheer, and the hereditary jokes with which brides used to be assailed in those days. I think, too, there was a dance, though how the couples in the reel found space to foot it in the little room, I cannot imagine; at any rate, there was a bright light out of the windows, gleaming across the road, and such a sound of the babble of numerous voices and merriment, that travellers passing by, on the lonely Lexington road, wished they were of the party; and one or two of them stopped

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and went in, and saw the new-made bride, drank to her health, and took a piece of the wedding-cake home to dream upon.

[It is to be observed that Rose had requested of her friend, Sibyl Dacy, to act as one of her bridesmaids, of whom she had only the modest number of two; and the strange girl declined, saying that her intermeddling would bring ill-fortune to the marriage.

"Why do you talk such nonsense, Sibyl?" asked Rose. "You love me, I am sure, and wish me well; and your smile, such as it is, will be the promise of prosperity, and I wish for it on my wedding-day."

"I am an ill-fate, a sinister demon, Rose; a thing that has sprung out of a grave; and you had better not entreat me to twine my poison tendrils round your destinies. You would repent it."

"Oh, hush, hush!" said Rose, putting her hand over her friend's mouth. "Naughty one! you can bless me, if you will, only you are wayward."

"Bless you, then, dearest Rose, and all happiness on your marriage!"]

Septimius had been duly present at the marriage, and kissed his sister with moist eyes, it is said, and a solemn smile, as he gave her into the keeping of Robert Hagburn; and there was something in the words he then used, that afterwards dwelt on her mind, as if they had a meaning in them that asked to be sought into, and needed reply.

"There, Rose," he had said, "I have made myself ready for my destiny. I have no ties any more, and may set forth on my path without scruple."

"Am I not your sister still, Septimius?" said she, shedding a tear or two.

"A married woman is no sister; nothing but a married woman till she becomes a mother; and then what shall I have to do with you?"

He spoke with a certain eagerness to prove his case, which Rose could not understand, but which was probably to justify himself in severing, as he was about to do, the link that connected him with his race, and making for himself an exceptional destiny, which, if it did not entirely insulate him, would at least create new relations with all. There he stood, poor fellow, looking on the mirthful throng, not in exultation, as might have been supposed, but with a strange sadness upon him. It seemed to him, at that final moment, as if it were Death that linked together all; yes, and so gave the warmth to all. Wedlock itself seemed a brother of Death; wedlock, and its sweetest hopes, its holy companionship, its mysteries, and all that warm mysterious brotherhood that is between men; passing as they do from mystery to mystery in a little gleam of light; that wild, sweet charm of uncertainty and temporariness—how lovely it made them all, how innocent, even the worst of them; how hard and prosaic was

his own situation in comparison to theirs. He felt a gushing tenderness for them, as if he would have flung aside his endless life, and rushed among them, saying,

"Embrace me! I am still one of you, and will not leave you! Hold me fast!"

After this it was not particularly observed that both Septimius and Sibyl Dacy had disappeared from the party, which, however, went on no less merrily without them. In truth, the habits of Sibyl Dacy were so wayward, and little squared by general rules, that nobody wondered or tried to account for them; and as for Septimius, he was such a studious man, so little accustomed to mingle with his fellow-citizens on any occasion, that it was rather wondered at that he should have spent so large a part of a sociable evening with them, than that he should now retire.

After they were gone the party received an unexpected addition, being no other than the excellent Doctor Portsoaken, who came to the door, announcing that he had just arrived on horseback from Boston, and that, his object being to have an interview with Sibyl Dacy, he had been to Robert Hagburn's house in quest of her; but learning from the old grandmother that she was here, he had followed.

Not finding her, he evinced no alarm, but was easily induced to sit down among the merry company, and partake of some brandy, which, with other liquors, Robert had provided in sufficient abundance; and that being a day when man had not learned to fear the glass, the doctor found them all in a state of hilarious chat. Taking out his German pipe, he joined the group of smokers in the great chimney-corner, and entered into conversation with them, laughing and joking, and mixing up his jests with that mysterious suspicion which gave so strange a character to his intercourse.

"It is good fortune, Mr. Hagburn," quoth he, "that brings me here on this auspicious day. And how has been my learned young friend Doctor Septimius—for so he should be called—and how have flourished his studies of late? The scientific world may look for great fruits from that decoction of his."

"He'll never equal Aunt Keziah for herb-drinks," said an old woman, smoking her pipe in the corner, "though I think likely he'll make a good doctor enough by-and-by. Poor Kezzy, she took a drop too much of her mixture, after all. I used to tell her how it would be; for Kezzy and I ever were pretty good friends once, before the Indian in her came out so strongly,—the squaw and the witch, for she had them both in her blood, poor yellow Kezzy!"

"Yes, had she indeed," quoth the doctor; "and I have heard an odd story, that if the Feltons chose to go back to the old country, they'd find a home and an estate there ready for them."

The old woman mused, and puffed at her pipe. "Ah, yes," muttered she at length, "I remember to have heard something about

that ; and how, if Felton chose to strike into the woods, he'd find a tribe of wild Indians there, ready to take him for their sagamore, and conquer the whites ; and how, if he chose to go to England, there was a great old house ready for him, and a fire burning in the hall, and a dinner-table spread, and the tall-posted bed ready, with clean sheets, in the best chamber, and a man waiting at the gate to show him in. Only there was a spell of a bloody footstep left on the threshold by the last that came out, so that none of his posterity could ever cross it again. But that was all nonsense."

"Strange old things one dreams in a chimney-corner," quoth the doctor. "Do you remember any more of this ?"

"No, no ; I'm so forgetful now-a-days," said old Mrs. Hagburn ; "only it seems as if I had my memories in my pipe, and they curl up in smoke. I've known these Feltons all along, or it seems as if I had ; for I'm nigh ninety years old now, and I was two year old in the witch's time, and I have seen a piece of the halter that old Felton was hung with."

Some of the company laughed.

"That must have been a curious sight," quoth the doctor.

"It is not well," said the minister, seriously, to the doctor, "to stir up these old remembrances, making the poor old lady appear absurd. I know not that she need to be ashamed of showing the weaknesses of the generation to which she belonged ; but I do not like to see old age put at this disadvantage among the young."

"Nay, my good and reverend sir," returned the doctor, "I mean no such disrespect as you seem to think. Forbid it, ye upper powers, that I should cast any ridicule on beliefs—superstitions, do you call them ?—that are as worthy of faith, for aught I know, as any that are preached in the pulpit. If the old lady would tell me any secret of the old Felton's science, I shall treasure it sacredly ; for I interpret these stories about his miraculous gifts as meaning that he had a great command over natural science, the virtues of plants, the capacities of the human body."

While these things were passing, or before they passed, or some time in that eventful night, Septimius had withdrawn to his study, when there was a low tap heard at the door, and opening it, Sibyl Dacy stood before him. It seemed as if there had been a previous arrangement between them ; for Septimius evinced no surprise, only took her hand, and drew her in.

"How cold your hand is !" he exclaimed. "Nothing is so cold, except it be the potent medicine. It makes me shiver."

"Never mind that," said Sibyl. "You look frightened at me."

"Do I !" said Septimius. "No, not that ; but this is such a crisis ; and methinks it is not yourself. Your eyes glare on me strangely."

"Ah, yes ; and you are not frightened at me ? Well, I will try

not to be frightened at myself. Time was, however, when I should have been."

She looked round at Septimius's study, with its few old books, its implements of science, crucibles, retorts, and electrical machines; all these she noticed little; but on the table drawn before the fire, there was something that attracted her attention; it was a vase that seemed of crystal, made in that old fashion in which the Venetians made their glasses—a most pure kind of glass, with a long stalk, within which was a curved elaboration of fancy-work, wreathed and twisted. This old glass was an heirloom of the Feltons, a relic that had come down with many traditions, bringing its frail fabric safely through all the perils of time, that had shattered empires; and, if space sufficed, I could tell many stories of this curious vase, which was said, in its time, to have been the instrument both of the devil's sacrament in the forest, and of the Christian in the village meeting-house. But, at any rate, it had been a part of the choice household gear of one of Septimius's ancestors, and was engraved with his arms, artistically done.

"Is that the drink of immortality?" said Sibyl.

"Yes, Sibyl," said Septimius. "Do but touch the goblet; see how cold it is."

She put her slender, pallid fingers on the side of the goblet, and shuddered, just as Septimius did when he touched her hand.

"Why should it be so cold?" said she, looking at Septimius.

"Nay, I know not, unless because endless life goes round the circle and meets death, and is just the same with it. Oh, Sibyl, it is a fearful thing that I have accomplished. Do you not feel it so? What if this shiver should last us through eternity!"

"Have you pursued this object so long," said Sibyl, "to have these fears respecting it now? In that case, methinks I could be bold enough to drink it alone, and look down upon you, as I did so, smiling at your fear to take the life offered you."

"I do not fear," said Septimius; "but yet I acknowledge there is a strange, powerful abhorrence in me towards this draught, which I know not how to account for, except as the reaction, the revulsion of feeling consequent upon its being too long overstrained in one direction. I cannot help it. The meanesses, the littlenesses, the perplexities, the general irksomeness of life, weigh upon me strangely. Thou didst refuse to drink with me. That being the case, methinks I could break the jewelled goblet now, untasted, and choose the grave as the wiser part."

"The beautiful goblet! What a pity to break it!" said Sibyl, with her characteristic malign and mysterious smile. "You cannot find it in your heart to do it."

"I could—I can. So thou wilt not drink with me?"

"Do you know what you ask?" said Sibyl. "I am a being that

sprung up, like this flower, out of a grave; or, at least, I took root in a grave, and, growing there, have twined about your life, until you cannot possibly escape from me. Ah, Septimius! you know me not. You know not what is in my heart towards you. Do you remember this broken miniature? Would you wish to see the features that were destroyed when that bullet passed? Then look at mine!"

"Sibyl! what do you tell me? Was it you—were they your features—which that young soldier kissed as he lay dying?"

"They were," said Sibyl. "I loved him, and gave him that miniature, and the face it represented. I had given him all, and you slew him."

"Then you hate me," whispered Septimius.

"Do you call it hatred?" asked Sibyl, smiling. "Have I not aided you, thought with you, encouraged you, heard all your wild ravings when you dared to tell no one else, kept up your hopes, suggested, helped you with my legendary lore to useful hints, helped you also in other ways, which you do not suspect? And you ask me if I hate you. Does this look like it?"

"No," said Septimius. "And yet, since first I knew you, there has been something whispering me of harm, as if I sat near some mischief. There is in me the wild, natural blood of the Indian, the instinctive, the animal nature, which has ways of warning that civilised life polishes away and cuts out; and so, Sibyl, never did I approach you, but there were reluctances, drawings back, and, at the same time, a strong impulse to come closest to you; and to that I yielded. But why, then, knowing that in this grave lay the man you loved, laid there by my hand—why did you aid me in an object which you must have seen was the breath of my life?"

"Ah, my friend—my enemy, if you will have it so—are you yet to learn that the wish of a man's inmost heart is oftenest that by which he is ruined and made miserable? But listen to me, Septimius. No matter for my earlier life; there is no reason why I should tell you the story, and confess to you its weakness, its shame. It may be I had more cause to hate the tenant of that grave than to hate you, who unconsciously avenged my cause; nevertheless, I came here in hatred and desire of revenge, meaning to lie in wait and turn your dearest desire against you, to eat into your life and distil poison into it, I sitting on this grave and drawing fresh hatred from it; and at last, in the hour of your triumph, I meant to make the triumph mine."

"Is this still so?" asked Septimius, with pale lips; "or did your fell purpose change?"

"Septimius, I am weak—a weak, weak girl—only a girl, Septimius; only eighteen yet," exclaimed Sibyl. "It is young, is it not? I might be forgiven much. You know not how bitter my purpose was to you. But look, Septimius, could it be worse than this? Hush, be still! Do not stir!"

She lifted the beautiful goblet from the ground, put it to her lips, and drank a deep draught from it ; then, smiling mockingly, she held it towards him.

"See ! I have made myself immortal before you. Will you drink ?"

He eagerly held out his hand to receive the goblet, but Sibyl, holding it beyond his reach a moment, deliberately let it fall upon the hearth, where it shattered into fragments, and the bright, cold water of immortality was all spilt, shedding its strange fragrance around.

"Sibyl, what have you done?" cried Septimius in rage and horror.

"Be quiet ! See what sort of immortality I win by it—then, if you like, distil your drink of eternity again, and quaff it."

"It is too late, Sibyl ; it was a happiness that may never come again in a lifetime. I shall perish as a dog does. It is too late !"

"Septimius," said Sibyl, who looked strangely beautiful, as if the drink, giving her immortal life, had likewise the potency to give immortal beauty answering to it. "Listen to me. You have not learned all the secrets that lay in those old legends, about which we have talked so much. There were two recipes, discovered or learned by the art of the studious old Gaspar Felton. One was said to be that secret of immortal life which so many old sages sought for, and which some were said to have found ; though, if that were the case, it is strange some of them have not lived till our day. Its essence lay in a certain rare flower, which, mingled properly with other ingredients of great potency in themselves, though still lacking the crowning virtue till the flower was supplied, produced the drink of immortality."

"Yes, and I had the flower, which I found in a grave," said Septimius, "and distilled the drink, which you have spilt."

"You had a flower, or what you called a flower," said the girl. "But, Septimius, there was yet another drink, in which the same potent ingredients were used ; all but the last. In this, instead of the beautiful flower, was mingled the semblance of a flower, but really a baneful growth out of a grave. This I sowed there, and it converted the drink into a poison, famous in old science—a poison which the Borgias used, and Marie de Medicis—and which has brought to death many a famous person, when it was desirable to his enemies. This is the drink I helped you to distil. It brings on death with pleasant and delightful thrills of the nerves. Oh, Septimius, Septimius, it is worth while to die, to be so blest, so exhilarated as I am now."

"Good God, Sibyl, is this possible ?"

"Even so, Septimius. I was helped by that old physician, Doctor Portsoaken, who, with some private purpose of his own, taught me

what to do ; for he was skilled in all the mysteries of those old physicians, and knew that their poisons at least were efficacious, whatever their drinks of immortality might be. But the end has not turned out as I meant. A girl's fancy is so shifting, Septimius. I thought I loved that youth in the grave yonder ; but it was you I loved—and, I am dying. Forgive me for my evil purposes, for I am dying."

"Why hast thou spilt the drink?" said Septimius, bending his dark brows upon her, and frowning over her ; "we might have died together."

"No, live, Septimius," said the girl, whose face appeared to grow bright and joyous, as if the drink of death exhilarated her like an intoxicating fluid. "I would not let you have it, not one drop. But to think," and here she laughed, "what a penance—what months of wearisome labour thou hast had—and what thoughts, what dreams, and how I laughed in my sleeve at them all the time ! Ha, ha, ha ! Then thou didst plan out future ages, and talked poetry and prose to me. Did I not take it very demurely, and answer thee in the same style ? and so thou didst love me, and kindly didst wish to take me with thee in thy immortality. Oh, Septimius, I should have liked it well ! Yes, latterly, only, I knew how the case stood. Oh, how I surrounded thee with dreams, and, instead of giving thee immortal life, so kneaded up the little life allotted thee with dreams and vapouring stuff, that thou didst not really live even that. Ah, it was a pleasant pastime, and pleasant is now the end of it. Kiss me, thou poor Septimius, one kiss !"

[She gives the ridiculous aspect to his scheme, in an airy way.]

But as Septimius, who seemed stunned, instinctively bent forward to obey her, she drew back. "No, there shall be no kiss ! There may be a little poison linger on my lips. Farewell ! Dost thou mean still to seek for thy liquor of immortality ?—ah, ah ! It was a good jest. We will laugh at it when we meet in the other world."

And here poor Sibyl Dacy's laugh grew fainter, and dying away, she seemed to die with it ; for there she was, with that mirthful, half-malign expression still on her face, but motionless ; so that, however long Septimius's life was likely to be, whether a few years or many centuries, he would still have her image in his memory so. And here she lay, among his broken hopes, now shattered as completely as the goblet which held his draught, and as incapable of being formed again.

The next day, as Septimius did not appear, there was search for him on the part of Doctor Portsoaken. His room was found empty ; the bed untouched. Then they sought him on his favourite hill-top ; but neither was he found there, although something was found that added to the wonder and alarm of his disappearance. It was the cold form of Sibyl Dacy, which was extended on the hillock, so often

mentioned, with her arms thrown over it ; but, looking in the dead face, the beholders were astonished to see a certain malign and mirthful expression, as if some airy part had been played out—some surprise—some practical joke of a peculiarly airy kind had burst with fairy shoots of fire among the company.

"Ah, she is dead ! Poor Sibyl Dacy !" exclaimed Doctor Portsoaken. "Her scheme then has turned out amiss."

This exclamation served to imply some knowledge of the mystery ; and it so impressed the auditors, among whom was Robert Hagburn, that they thought it not inexpedient to have an investigation ; so the learned doctor was not uncivilly taken into custody and examined. Several interesting particulars, some of which throw a certain degree of light on our narrative, were discovered. For instance, that Sibyl Dacy, who was a niece of the doctor's, had been beguiled from her home and led over the sea by Cyril Norton, and that the doctor, arriving in Boston with another regiment, had found her there, after her lover's death. Here there was some discrepancy or darkness in the doctor's narrative. He appeared to have consented to, or instigated (for it was not quite evident how far his concurrence had gone), this poor girl's scheme of going and brooding over her lover's grave, and living in close contiguity with the man who had slain him. The doctor had not much to say for himself on this point ; but there was found reason to believe that he was acting in the interest of some English claimant of a great estate that was left without an apparent heir by the death of Cyril Norton ; and there was even a suspicion that he, with his fantastic science and antiquated empiricism, had been at the bottom of the scheme of poisoning, which was so strangely intertwined with Septimius's notion, in which he went so nearly crazed, of a drink of immortality. It was observable, however, that the doctor—such a humbug in scientific matters, that he had perhaps bewildered himself—seemed to have a sort of faith in the efficacy of the recipe which had so strangely come to light, provided the true flower could be discovered ; but that flower, according to Doctor Portsoaken, had not been seen on earth for many centuries, and was banished probably for ever. The flower, or fungus, which Septimius had mistaken for it, was a sort of earthly or devilish counterpart of it, and was greatly in request among the old poisoners for its admirable uses in their art. In fine, no tangible evidence being found against the worthy doctor, he was permitted to depart, and disappeared from the neighbourhood, to the scandal of many people, unchanged ; leaving behind him few available effects beyond the web and empty skin of an enormous spider.

As to Septimius, he returned no more to his cottage by the wayside, and none undertook to tell what had become of him ; crushed and annihilated, as it were, by the failure of his magnificent and most absurd dreams. Rumours there have been, however, at various

times, that there had appeared an American claimant, who had made out his right to the great estate of Smithell's Hall, and had dwelt there, and left posterity, and that in the subsequent generation an ancient baronial title had been revived in favour of the son and heir of the American. Whether this was our Septimius, I cannot tell; but I should be rather sorry to believe that, after such splendid schemes as he had entertained, he should have been content to settle down into the fat substance and reality of English life, and die in his due time, and be buried like any other man.

A few years ago, while in England, I visited Smithell's Hall, and was entertained there, not knowing at the time that I could claim its owner as my countryman by descent; though, as I now remember, I was struck by the thin, sallow, American cast of his face, and the lithe slenderness of his figure, and seem now (but this may be my fancy) to recollect a certain Indian glitter of the eye, and cast of feature.

As for the Bloody Footstep I saw it with my own eyes, and will venture to suggest that it was a mere natural reddish stain in the stone, converted by superstition into a Bloody Footstep.

END.

A WET EASTER AT GREENWICH.

I AM old enough to remember Greenwich Fair, and the hideous racket it caused during Easter Week in the pleasant old borough—a place to which both nobs and snobs resort for pleasure, which is sometimes “fast;” and yet the town generally looks half cosily, half pathetically, drowsy, as if it were dreaming of its history. And after the Fair, whose “fun” had become a mere synonyme for black-guardism of all kinds, had been, fortunately, put down, I remember Easters during which the Cockneys still flocked down to Greenwich, as the phrase goes, “in their thousands.” But those thronged Easters at Greenwich were sunny Easters, and our last Easter was an emphatically “juicy” one. On a day in Easter week, in which damp blinks of sunlight—not hung out long enough to dry—alternated with rattling showers, I found myself at Cannon Street Terminus, and took it into my head to run down to see whether Greenwich was looking “jolly under creditable circumstances.”

Any one who had left England twenty years ago, and who were now to start for Greenwich from London, for the first time since his return to the old country, would find much to offend his conservative memories of the past, even though he might be compelled to admit that the changes were, logically, improvements. Those who see the improvements made gradually, half grudge each freshest step of progress; but when, after a long exile, a man comes home and finds his landmarks taken away and added to by the dozen, he cannot help at first sorely resenting this wholesale consignment of his life to the dreadful past. In the instance I am referring to, there would be the starting from Charing Cross or Cannon Street Terminus—huge structures, which must seem more like daymare dreams than tangible brick and mortar to the returned wanderer. Then, if he had started from Charing Cross, there would be the three times crossing the river, to get in a queer up-and-down sort of fashion to London Bridge—relegated to the comparative insignificance of a roadside station; to which, if he had resorted in the first instance, he would have found his Greenwich booking-office improved off the surface of the earth, and his North Kent booking-offices turned into refreshment rooms, squeezed in, and darkened by a heavy viaduct. If the river railway-bridges he had travelled over had not been enough to bewilder him, he would have seen also the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Bridge ruling out the beauty of New Blackfriars Bridge. Westminster Bridge and the Embankment would likewise have been new to him. So would St. Thomas's Hospital, and the

great Southwark Warehouses, he had passed on his puzzled route, to his puzzled rumbling past the dismantled site of old St. Thomas's. The changed look of the London Bridge Station incline would have been an enigma to him ; and beyond the station there would be more perplexity. He would see the lines of straight, crossing, and curving rails, which he could not count when he was last in England, maziily multiplied—bits of what had been boundary-walls of the whole conflux of South Eastern and South Coast Railways then, left standing in the middle of the dizzying convergence of rails like crumbling lumps of dingy gingerbread. He would see lines branching off from, and running under the main iron thoroughfare, at all kinds of levels, in confusion worse confounded. He would recognise the old sea of black and yellow hovels, the smoke of whose tenants' torment goeth up for ever ; but he would find that the fresher-looking fringes of that dense, dingy ocean of squalid brick and mortar had overlapped acres of market-gardens, which he remembered green with the broad flags of the rhubarb, and white and pink with fruit-blossom, and that towering piles of ornate building had supplanted many of the "works," whose architecture was scarcely distinguishable from that of the jammed hovels it barely overlooked. He would recognise some of the old low-roofed rope-walks, the smell of tan, and the multitudinous less-wholesome stench of Bermondsey ; but he would find the Spa Road Station smartened out of knowledge, and the Commercial Docks Station vanished. He would nod gratefully here and there to a pepper-and-salt old church, but he would not feel religiously inclined when he cast his eyes on the modern places of worship which had sprung up like mushrooms in the district with which he *was* familiar. Deptford Creek, with its barges wallowing in its mire like swine, may seem to be as normally at low-water as of old. Encouraged by this sight of something that seems the same, the returned wanderer may let his eyes run over the greatly thickened mass of mean masonry lying between him and the river, and exclaim triumphantly, though the ship-sheds, that used to look like black-beaded turtles with the gloss off, have been freshened up of late—

"Ah, there's Deptford Dockyard, at any rate."

But a matter-of-fact fellow-passenger soon pulls him up with—

"There is no Deptford Royal Dockyard now, sir. What you're a-lookin' at is the new Foreign Cattle Market ; and since the yard was to be a-done away with, it's a good thing that Deptford got the foreign cattle—though there a'n't many on 'em as yet."

Even the returned wanderer cannot remember that Deptford was a very inviting place in *his* time, but he jumbles up Henry the Eighth founding the dockyard, Elizabeth knighting Drake off it, and Peter the Great working in it, and then getting trundled in a wheelbarrow through prim Mr. Evelyn's trim hedges at Say's Court, and so on, and so on ; and his vague historical recollections make him feel that it is incumbent upon him to become vaguely sentimental. He

does not exactly "heave a sigh"—that being done now-a-days only in books, and by slumbering bullocks; but he thinks that the old England to which he has come back is a very different place from what it used to be, even in his time, and tries to think that he is very sorry. On the road to Greenwich such a traveller, however, will find two landmarks that will comfort him. Deptford Station's dinginess is stereotyped—it is neither worse nor better than when he left it twenty years ago. The portly official with the wooden leg, for many a year familiar to Deptford Station *habitua*s, is the only missing feature. The dusty, draughty dreariness of Greenwich Station has also been stereotyped, and in it our returned traveller can see at the present day the precise facsimile, at any rate, of the traffic-manager, in a chimney-pot hat over a uniform coat, he must remember of old. The rolling-stock is new. The cattle-truck, open third-class carriages have been abolished; the second-class carriages are comfortably cushion-backed and seated; the first-class carriages, although not improved inside, are smarter outside; but the station remains the same to a cursory glance as when our wanderer last left it.

"Very differently peopled, though," he would say—if that last time had been in Greenwich Fair time, however wet the Easter might have been. My train dropped far more passengers at Spa Road than it landed at Greenwich. Two or three dribbled out at Deptford, and then I could not help thinking of ships drifting with the dead to shores where all was dumb. My only carriage companion was a silent, feeble old widow, who, I fancy, in the old times, would as soon have thought of flying as of travelling on the Greenwich Railway at Easter—even of stepping outside her Greenwich front-door, or even of peeping, when roysterers were passing, through her blinded front parlour window. The poor old lady had nothing to alarm her as the train rolled into the dull station, along whose platform the porters crawled snail-like, but apparently without any of the snail's love of rain. They could take things more easily than they could have done if the holiday had been fine; but, after all, they had the same amount of work to get through, without any supporting excitement. The fly-drivers outside the station were almost too sulkily hopeless of fares to make even a pretence of lifting their whips, and the shoe-blacks mumbled "Shine your boots, sir," in a drowsy, afternoon-service tone. It was the routine they had to get through, but they evidently had faint expectation of finding any one fool enough to want to have "shined" boots which would become as dim and muddy as ever after half a dozen yards' walk.

In London Street a few beery roughs, with vari-coloured paper ornaments in their hats and caps, were taking their pleasure after the manner of their kind, shoutingly and pushingly, but they had scarcely any one but those of their own kind to shove up against. Shopkeepers stood at the doors of their shops, gaping with ennui. The police interfered in some trivial row, and took the offenders

along a narrow side lane ; a little crowd crammed its mouth, and—the street was empty. The present fine parish church of Greenwich, although it has a venerable, Time-touched look, is comparatively modern, being one of “Queen Anne’s new fifty;” but it carries itself as if it knew that the Danes killed its patron-saint, St. Alphage, on its site, and that Henry the Eighth was baptised and married to Catherine of Arragon in its predecessor. St. Alphage’s, when I passed it in the rain, looked calmly pleased that no vulgar row disturbed its Easter contemplations. Quaint old Church Street, which, if I remember rightly, Clarkson Stanfield has limned in his illustrations of *Poor Jack*—a thoroughly *Greenwichy* story—was perfectly quiet. A little damp bunting was, not flying, but dismally drooping in the tea-and-shrimps street, which has an advertisement of the Crown and Sceptre at its corner. The street running down to the Ship and the Pier might have been a rifle-range. A man, with his damply glossy hat-brim drooping like a water-spaniel’s ears just out of the water, was—too late, I thought—sheltering from the rain in the Nelson Street entrance of the melancholy, deserted markets. Along Nelson Street, however, from East Greenwich, with splashboards covered with mud, came a vehicle that would have astounded the hypothetical returned wanderer to whom I have made reference : to wit, a tram-car. It looked like a tram-*hearse*, with its one grim passenger. The rain having moderated into mizzle, and having Nelson Street almost to myself, I stopped by a lamp-post and tried to “realise the historical interest” of the place in which, under my umbrella still, I had planted myself. On one hand was the house which Inigo Jones built for Henrietta Maria ; on the other, the magnificent pile which Henrietta’s son began to build for his own enjoyment, but which, through the compassion of his niece, became the noble hospital in which thousands of old sailors have found shelter, and yarned about adventures in all parts of the world. Now-a-days the old boys prefer fourteen shillings a week and their service pension outside the walls, to the Hospital’s 7 lbs. of bread, 5 lbs. of meat, pint of peas, pound and a quarter of cheese, 2 ounces of butter, 14 quarts of beer, and shilling, eighteenpence, or half-a-crown tobacco money a week. I fancy that in one sense they cannot live nearly so “well” now as they lived in the Hospital, but perhaps they live better in another ; and it is a good thing they had the chance of leaving offered them, for the jolly old boys, little as their liberty was restricted, were always grumbling whilst they stayed at “the College.” Still it made a wet Easter at Greenwich drearier than ever to see no blue “geese” rolling about the streets, and the grand old Hospital, although part of it has been turned into an hospital in the medical and surgical sense, almost as solitary as Balclutha. What a long way back the history of its site extends. Nearly six hundred years ago it bore a royal residence. There Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, embattled and then rebuilt his manor-house, enclosing at the same

time his park of 200 acres—almost exactly the same Greenwich Park that Cookneys lark in A.D. 1872. Edward the Fourth finished and beautified Duke Humphrey's palace—fellows who go down to dine at Greenwich now-a-days, by-the-bye, do not "dine with Duke Humphrey." Henry the Seventh had a great liking for his Greenwich palace, and there Henry the Eighth, and his brother, Duke of Somerset, were born. Queen Mary, of sanguineous memory, and Queen Bess were both born there, too; and there their brother Edward died. Greenwich Palace was Elizabeth's Osborne. Readers of the *Fortunes of Nigel* need not be told that James the First liked Greenwich; his successor lived there; and when Parliament seized the Crown Lands, Greenwich Park was reserved for the use of the State. Greenwich manor, &c., came back into Crown possession when that good-humoured scamp, Charles the Second, was "restored." It was he who pulled down Duke Humphrey's tower in Greenwich Park, and built the Observatory on its site.

When I turned up Tea Pot Lane, what a change did I notice! Instead of having to run the gauntlet of a row of damsels, one at every door, exclaiming, "Tea or coffee, sir; hot water, shrimps, comfortable sofa," I merely saw one little girl peeping out of, and suddenly popping back into a doorway, like a melancholy rabbit. In the Park, as soppy as a wet sponge, two little parties of boys were playing at football. Two timber-waggon, one driven off the road by a man drunkenly savage at having to work on a holiday, came creaking down the hill. Two dozen saunterers, at the outside, most of them solitary, and as sad-faced as if about to commit suicide in the reservoir behind the Observatory, were all I met in the noble old park. The donkeys and ponies on Blackheath stood in rows drenched with drooping heads. If language could warm, the words their disappointed owners used might have dried their beasts' skins and caparison; but the poor drudges looked as if they enjoyed the rain that for once had given *them* a holiday at Easter. A wiry old Scotchman in a shepherd's plaid, and with a Skye terrier at his heels, was striding along, as if the dampness of the atmosphere made him think his foot was on his native heath. Our returned wanderer would have wondered to find the cosy old "Green Man" supplanted by a modern hotel, tacked on to a white brick terrace, and farther down Blackheath Hill he would have encountered another disagreeable surprise—to wit, a London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Station. Both inn and station were silent as the grave. Greenwich was becoming oppressive, and I hurried back to my own station, passing, as I turned into South Street, an Easter holiday-maker, staggering on the pavement, and stammering, as he made a pump-handle of his left arm, and smiled blandly at empty space, "Oh, w-w-what a b-blessed world this would be, if ev'body wash ash w-w-wise ash I'm."

A SAUNTERER.

PAN.

"Pan, Pan, is dead!"—E. B. BROWNING.

THE broken wine-cups of the Gods
Lie scatter'd in the Waters deep,
Where the tall sea-flag blows and nods
Over the shipwreck'd seaman's sleep ;
The Gods, like phantoms, come and go
Over the wave-wash'd ocean-hall,
Above their heads the wild winds blow ;
They groan, they shiver to and fro—
"Pan, Pan !" those phantoms call.

O Pan, great Pan, thou art not dead,
Nor dost thou haunt that weedy place,
Tho' blowing winds hear not thy tread,
And silver runlets miss thy face ;
Where ripe nuts fall thou hast no state,
Where deep glens murmur, thou art dumb,
By lonely meres thou dost not wait ;—
Where roll the living waves of fate
I feel *thee* go and come !

O piteous one !—In wintry days
Over the City falls the snow,
Then, where it whitens smoky ways,
I see a Shade flit to and fro ;
Over the dull street hangs a cloud—
It parts, an ancient Face flits by,
'Tis thine ! 'tis thou ! nor stern, nor proud,
Dimly thou flutterest o'er the crowd,
With a thin human cry.

Ghost-like, O Pan, thou hoverest still,
An old, old Face, with dull, dumb stare ;
On moonless nights thy breath blows chill
In the street-walker's dripping hair ;

Thy ragged woe from street to street
 Goes mist-like, constant day and night ;
 But often, where the black waves beat,
 Thou hast a smile most strangely sweet
 For honest hearts and light !

Where'er thy shadowy vestments fly
 There comes across the waves of strife,
 Across the souls of all close by,
 The gleam of some forgotten life :
 There is a sense of waters clear,
 A scent like flowers in forest nooks ;
 Strange-plumaged birds seem flitting near ;
 The cold brain blossoms, lives that hear
 Murmur like running brooks.

And when thou passest, human eyes
 Look in each other and are wet—
 Simple or gentle, weak or wise,
 Alike are full of tender fret ;
 And then the noble and the base
 Raise common glances to the sky ;—
 And lo ! the phantom of thy Face,
 While sad and low thro' all the place
 Thrills thy thin human cry !

Christ help thee, Pan ! canst thou not go
 Now all the other gods are fled ?
 Why dost thou flutter to and fro
 When all the sages deem thee dead ?
 Or, if thou yet wilt live and dream,
 Why leave the vales of harvest fair—
 Why quit the glades of wood and stream—
 And haunt the streets with eyes that gleam
 Thro' white and holy hair ?

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

AMONG THE HEBRIDES.*

BY AN IDLE VOYAGER.

IV.—A HEBRIDEAN INTERIOR—THE DOCTOR OF SOULS AND DOCTOR OF BODIES.

WITHIN a large chamber, lit with a peat-fire burning brightly on the flag-stone hearth of an enormous ingle, gathered several figures. In a rudely carved arm-chair sat, with his back to the window, a man with hair as white as snow, and clad in a suit of tweed of homely cut. Close to him, on a large wooden peg, hung a broad weather-worn wide-awake hat, in shape not unlike a Mexican sombrero, and with it, on the same peg, an enormous walking-stick, with a head in the shape of a shepherd's crook.

In the centre of the chamber, a middle-aged woman sat spinning, her face brightly lit up by the fire, and by the light of an old cruse lamp; burning very dimly indeed, the latter swung to the rafters overhead, which age and the heat of the chamber had burnished as black as ebony. The woman's face was turned, with a sad careworn smile, to the third member of the party, who, smoking a very black pipe, and sipping grog out of a tumbler, sat talking in the corner of the ingle.

This was a very old man indeed, if one could judge by the deeply wrinkled face and stooping form, but his eyes were so bright and black, and his mouth so lively, that he seemed the youngest member of the party. He sat in the full gleam of the light, with his face to the window, speaking rapidly, and obviously telling some story to which the others listened in the deepest attention.

The colouring of the whole scene would have gladdened a shadow-loving painter, such as Rembrandt or the artists of "Dutch interiors." Dimly, in the fine darkness, the eye picked up one object after another. The first thing noticed was the gleam of the fire, and its reflection on the human faces; then the great black kettle swinging over the fire, the spinning-wheel, and the polished dishes ranged here and there on the walls; then the great black polished rafters; and lastly, back again to the human faces, which were giving to the little genre picture its whole interest and meaning.

The old man spoke very rapidly in Gaelic, only now and then pausing to give a wheezing cough.

* See the No. for January, 1872.

"The fever in every knuckle of his bones, and the dance of St. Vitus in all his limbs : that's what I wish for him ; and when that day comes, may I be near to mix his physic and tell him of his sins. Kirsty, darling, well may you shake your head, for the tale's true ! All their beasts are seized, not to speak of their cocks and hens, and the big skiff with the new set of sails ; and them only one half-year's rent past due. Mark my words, Peter na Croiche wants the bit of land for his own grazing, and that's why he's so hard on the M'Kinnons."

"Peter Dougall is a hard man," said the other man, who sat with his back to the window ; "a hard man, and a curse to the poor ; but the fault is less with him than with those who make him what he is, and put the law in his hands. If the lairds came now and then to look after their own land, instead of leaving it in the hands of ignorant men, whose only object it is to feather their own nests and keep their own lamps in oil, the islands would be better off !"

The last speaker spoke in a deep mellow voice, with a certain refinement of speech and gentlemanly dignity of manner.

"That will never take place in our day," returned the other ; "it's the sheep and their masters, and tools of the Devil like Peter na Croiche, that are turning the west into a wilderness, and shipping every brave Highland heart to the land of the stranger. Where I saw a hundred families forty years ago, I now see but two or three, and them pinched with hunger and lonesome as mountain deer ; and if God grants me another ten years, and I can see out of my eyes, there won't be a babe to bring into the world, for not a man will be left in Uribol to father one. Think of what I was once, father, and look at me now. I began with doctoring the bodies of men and women, with bringing people into the world and helping them easily out of it ; and I rode from door to door on my own horse, and had both my hands full of pleasant work ; and when the cholera passed this way in 'Thirty, had I any rest night or day attending the sick and pulling them through ? Well ! here I am, seventy years old, and as steady at an operation as when I was twenty ; and I see the waste round me, and hear the beasts howling ; and if I was too proud to doctor sheep and cattle I should be starving this day. Once I could scarcely rest in my bed without being knocked out of my first sleep. Now I can sleep sound enough as long as I please. It seemed like old times when I was knocked up the other night by Red John the herd, from Callum's farm in the hollow ; and I hurried on my clothes and went along with him ; but it was only the brindled cow taken in labour, and like to die if I couldn't help her through her trouble with the instruments."

There was silence once more ; and the Priest watched the old Doctor somewhat impatiently, yawning once or twice as if it was time to be in bed. While they were sitting still in the light of the

peat-fire, they were a curious contrast, each showing in his peculiar way the cunning handiwork of time.

Norman MacDonald, the Roman Catholic Priest of Uribol, was an old man of seventy, tall almost to ungainliness, thin, gaunt, with a grave clean-shaven face and large melancholy eyes. He had once stood nearly seven feet high in his shoes, and though his shoulders were now bent with age, he still seemed of gigantic height when standing erect. He was one of those men who are only to be found in the Highlands of Scotland and some parts of Ireland: a man of the people and yet a scholar, a Roman Catholic and yet no bigot, a man of the world who never penetrated beyond a barren solitude. Forty long years had he dwelt in Uribol, wifeless, almost friendless, a solitary student among a wild untutored race. In all seasons and in all weathers, across wild waters and over almost impassable mountains, he had carried the word of God in faith and humility. He knew every face in the isles as a shepherd knows his sheep. He had sat for days by sick-beds prescribing both for the body and for the soul, and he had been at every death-bed like a spirit of hope and promise. He was a busy husbandman and cultivated a small glebe with his own hands, and there was no better judge of sheep or cattle in the whole district. Unlike most of his brethren, he was a man of dreamy temperament, a great lover of nature and a diligent observer of natural phenomena. He was a great upholder of the authenticity of the Celtic or Ossianic epos; and he had communicated to the Society in Edinburgh, of which he was a member, many papers of strange interest on the antiquities of the islands.

The poetry of his soul was real, though it did not lie upon the surface—though his conversation was not brilliant and his temperament not genial. Those who knew him best—and none knew him better than the poor of his own parish—those who had seen him in his brightest moods of spiritual sympathy and compassion in the most awful epochs of life, never named Father MacDonald without a blessing, and never passed him without awe.

In every possible respect, and from almost every attainable point of view, the Doctor was a contrast to the Priest. To begin with, he was much older and frailer. Though he had all his faculties about him, he was between seventy and eighty years of age.

John Mathieson, like his friend the Priest, had spent all his days in the Highlands; but far more in the style of a wandering Arab than that of a settled practitioner. When he spoke of being "knocked up" at all hours of the night, and conveyed to the hearer the idea of a snug bed and a comfortable home, he was drawing largely on his imagination; for he could scarcely be said to have a settled habitation at all. He wandered from island to island, and from village to village; now overhauling the sick at Uribol, again wandering through the wilds of Skye and the mainland, always welcome and ever trusted

wherever he went, although he could drink more whiskey than any man in the Highlands. Nor was his practice confined to the poor. He had a good practice among the rich lairds of the West and their ladies; and he had brought into the world many of the most distinguished people of these parts. It was usual, when a birth seemed imminent, to send for Doctor John, to lodge him in the house in readiness, and to keep him in drink and meat till the hour came; and, on occasions like these, he had been known to be retained, in a state of semi-intoxication, for weeks together, till the event came, when he would thrust his hot head under the pump, or into a basin, drink a draught of cold water, and be himself in a moment. Many were his droll anecdotes connected with this part of his vocation; nor did he spare his own faults in his narrations.

He was a shrewd man, full of animal spirits, and not too delicate-minded; content to take the world as he found it, and not over-much given to compassion for its griefs. Herein may be noted the special difference between him and the Priest. The latter was by far the most intelligent man, the brighter-minded, the more emotional; yet his bright thoughts and love of nature scarcely ever found vent in words. The Doctor, on the other hand, who had little real imagination and no subtlety of feeling, was a poet, and actually a very successful one, his Gaelic compositions being in high repute among the islanders, and sung at many a feast and wedding to the great delight of young and old. He excelled, too, in a species of composition very popular in the Highlands—a rude species of satiric chant, wherein the peculiarities and peccadilloes of a particular people were hit off with what seemed to the natives terrific humour. Woe to the man or woman who offended him, and earned the sharp lash of his satire. One poor girl, who had loved not wisely but too well, and had for some reason awakened the Doctor's special displeasure, had been so wounded by a brief composition of the bard, that she had fled ignominiously from the parish. It was also said that the use of the terrible scourge was to be purchased for money. Again and again was the Doctor requested to "compose a song" expressive of private contempt or hostility, and again and again he got payment in money or goods. We ought to add that his satire was neither very brilliant nor very delicate, though smartly expressed enough. Personal deformity and moral obliquity alike came in for his abuse; but he was greatest of all when he had a "red-hair'd man," or a "bandy" lover, or a girl who "squinted." Strange to say, he made very few enemies; and his compositions were often taken in good part by the very victims themselves.

Although now so old and feeble, he lived still in his old wandering style. He could not walk far, however, and never visited the interior, unless a horse was specially sent for him. However, most of his places of call were close to the sea-shore, and he was able to perform

his "rounds" by water. He had no boat of his own, but seldom, indeed, did he find a boatman unwilling to ferry him gratis; the privilege of listening to "Doctor John's" songs and stories being payment enough in all conscience to any civilised being. We cannot say that his influence was altogether salutary. Somehow or other, wherever he went, he left a droll trail of drunkenness and disturbance. The people who sheltered him, the boatmen who ferried him, the very sick he attended, felt the wild fascination of his presence long after he had departed; and it was not at all an uncommon explanation, when this or that person was found in drink, to say, quietly, "Oh, ay, he began last week when Doctor John was here, and he'll not stop now."

Despite all this, and despite his great age, the Doctor was skilful, and the islanders believed in his skill. He was a physician of the "old school," and did not awaken suspicion by any alarming experiments; and leaving a great deal of his cures to nature, he was, in the majority of cases, very successful.

Seated in the Priest's kitchen, he smoked his pipe and blinked with his old wrinkled weather-beaten face at his host; until the latter, with a great yawn, rose out of his arm-chair and stood erect, his snow-white head nearly reaching to the black rafters.

"It is past midnight," he said, "and I must be up soon after daybreak."

If there was one thing the Doctor hated more than another, it was retiring to bed at a rational hour. Give him a drop to drink and some one to talk with—or, what was the same thing, to be talked to, and he would sit up any night till daybreak. How his constitution endured the trials he gave it, infinite alcohol and little or no sleep, is a question not to be answered by any mere mortal. Nature sometimes makes men like him to show what she can do when she has a mind to put out her strength; veritable men of iron, on whose mighty frames disease, pain, fatigue, dissipation, make no perceptible impression.

Doctor John looked at the Priest and nodded.

"I'll turn in when I've smoked this pipe out," he observed; "but let me tell you, father,—and it's myself that speaks as a medical man—you've injured your health by going to bed too early, and taking too little to drink. Too much sleep is downright ruin to the human corporation; it relaxes the humours, it spoils the circulation, and it plays the devil with the liver."

The Priest laughed.

"And too much whiskey?"

"There your very speech is a contradiction, father. You *can't* take too much whiskey in this climate; and it's for lack of whiskey that the population is eaten up with ague, rheumatism, scurvy, and every disease that grows in a wet air and on a damp soil. Give a

poor man a glass of whiskey, and you give him meat, drink, clothes, and physic, all in one. I wish I could afford it, and I'd prescribe nothing but Talisker and Long John; but it's a dear medicine, and far too scarce among my patients, that's the truth."

And he looked at the Priest with a droll twinkle in his eye, holding out his glass to be replenished from a black bottle in the corner. At that moment a loud sound, as of singing, was heard without, and immediately afterwards a figure passed the window, singing aloud in a thin sharp voice in Gaelic.

"Who's that?" cried the Doctor.

"Unless I'm very much mistaken, it's Angus nan Chohan."

As he spoke the latch was lifted, and the door opened.

"Peace be to all in this house!"

So saying the speaker entered, closing the door behind him, and reverently saluting the old Priest.

V.—ANGUS-WITH-THE-DOGS.

THE new comer was a man of middle age, whose large wandering eyes and unnaturally large forehead suggested weakness of intellect, and whose straight-cut fierce mouth, just as surely indicated strength of will. He was almost bald, and what hair remained to him hung in shock tangles down to his shoulders, while his long careworn face was rendered doubly long and haggard, by a pair of bushy grey whiskers. He spoke in a thin piping voice, almost a lisp. His attitude as he stood before the priest waiting for his blessing, was reverent in the extreme.

If his face was strange and wild, his dress was stranger and wilder. He wore an enormous great-coat made of fustian, very loose, and reaching almost to his heels, girt around the middle by a hempen rope very frayed and black with long use. The ends of his trousers, where they peeped under the tails of his coat, were torn and ragged; and his large feet were scantily covered by a pair of blucher boots, so worn that they hardly held together. His coat, very tight round the waist, fell open about the breast, showing that he wore neither shirt nor waistcoat, although his bosom was so covered with long matted hair as to stand in no particular need of either.

This was Angus nan Chohan; in English, Angus-with-the-dogs.

The significance of this title, became apparent at a glance. Out of his breast were staring three little heads, those of very young skye-terrier puppies, and at his feet, another skye-terrier—obviously the mother of the brood—was sitting in attendance, watching him with a wistful countenance.

"Peace be to all in this house," he exclaimed, taking off a torn Highland bonnet, and holding it in his hand.

"And the blessing of God be upon you, Angus nan Chohan," said the Priest, gently, "you are a late guest."

Angus abandoned his reverent attitude, and answered volubly in the thin piping tones of a professional mendicant.

"Better late than never, Father MacDonald, as they say in the South; and glory be to God, I see you stout and strong as ever, and well may we praise Him, for health's a blessing. There's Doctor John, too, long life to him, and a grand man every inch of him, though sore on the whiskey. By the soul of my father, it's a comfort to talk the Gaelic again to him and you, for it's but a poor language, the English, and doesn't fit on right with a Highland tongue like mine; and I've wandered east and west, since I last stood under this roof,—may the God in heaven protect it and its owner!—and I've sorely missed the pleasure of three things: the shake of a Highland-man's fist, a bowl of good oatmeal porridge, and the taste of a good dram of Highland whiskey."

He spoke with great rapidity, with a vacant face and wandering eye, yet with a certain indescribable air of cunning and lying in wait.

"Try that, Angus," said the Priest, offering him a glass of raw spirits.

"Long life and the love of God!" said Angus, draining off the liquor. "Och! but that's a good dram."

"Take a seat by the fire and warm yourself. Have you been far this time?"

"The world's wide, and I've wandered far," answered Angus, seating himself on a stool by the fire. "Through the island of Skye to Portree, where there's much thieving and little fishing, and over the ferry at Kyle Akin, and away on the road to Inverness; and a fine town it is, with plenty of fine gentry and churches and houses by the score. Then I came down the great canal to Fort William, and there I got a passage to Oban; and at Oban I lost the pride of my heart, Donacha Dhu, for he was tossed by a bull on the quay, and came down on the water as dead as a stone. You mind Duncan, Doctor?—him without a tail, a collie, and more sense in one of his paws than most men's brains. It was a sore grief to me; but I just bore up, for we must all die. Then I took the road to Ardrishaig, and had enough to do with thieves and tinker folk who were travelling the same road, and were no fit company for a decent man. You would weary greatly, and so I tell you, if I spoke of all my adventures in the south country. It's a thriving country, but all covered over with the Devil's smoke from a thousand chimneys; and the people there are mean ignorant dirt, and the gentry meanest of all. But it would do your heart good to see the big river Clyde, and the great steamers coming and going, for all the world like the beasts in the Revelations; and ships sailing about with their white wings, and the air all full of the noise of hammers, and the making of a thousand ships. It's an awful place, father,—just like the bad place itself. And I walked away up the country by night, and I saw a hundred fires flaming in the darkness."

on every side of me, and I heard the foof-foofing of the crimson flames, and I saw the black shapes walking about in the heart of the smoke, and, begging grace of your holiness and no offence to Doctor John, I thought I was in hell !”

“Faith,” said the Doctor, “you’re not the first man that the same sight has led to the same conclusion. Did you visit Glasgow?”

Without directly replying to the question, Angus kept his eyes fixed on the fire, and continued his narrative in a monotone, as if it were something he had learned by heart. Allied to his air of mingled simplicity and cunning, he evinced a simpering sort of self-esteem, especially as to his own intellectual shrewdness—a peculiarity common enough among people of his class.

“I saw the big city of Glasgow, and it’s a wonderful place, but full of rogues as an egg is of meat. The houses are that high that they reach up into the clouds, and the sky above is just smoke ; and the faces of all the folk are black and grey with breathing of smoke and fire. I saw more horses and carts in one day than I ever saw in my life before, and the people going to and fro were like waves of the sea ; and the streets were full of painted shops for the sale of drink, and at every street corner there’s a blackguard in black ready to take up any decent man that asks help for the love of God. I fell in with bad company there, more shame to me, and the curse of God seemed to have come upon me, when I found myself consorting with thieves and bad women ; and when I spoke to these same on the shameful-ness of their ways, they fell upon me and the dogs, and left the whole of us in the street for dead. Then they locked me in a black hole of stone, and all night long I heard the dogs howling outside in the street because they were not allowed to come to me ; and when day came and they let me out, I shook the dust off the soles of my feet and came away, for devil a one would give a crust or a drop to a decent man, and none would lodge me for the love of God.”

“Well, well,” observed the Doctor ; “you’ll not be taking that road in a hurry. It’s not for poor men, and you were wandering away from your meat.”

Angus looked at the speaker, dreamily.

“I don’t know but what you’re right, Doctor John, for you’re a clever man and a scholar ; but, begging your pardon, and long life to you, I think it’s a good thing for a lad to see the world he lives in, and study the wonderful works of Nature to the best of his power ; and knowledge doesn’t come to a man without trouble, and many a time it’s bought dear. It’s a great city, Glasgow, just a wilderness where no man can find his way, and though it’s full of meat and drink, and iron ships, and silver and gold, and though they’re telling me the rich folk sleep on crimson velvet beds, stuffed with the down of the wild swan, it made my heart sore to see the many helpless doggies—some of them not much older than these pups I have in my

breast—wandering about the naked streets with not a soul to own or feed them. It's a true proverb, too, 'Bad dog, bad master,' and the dogs of the big city have ways any decent man's dogs would be ashamed to own. They cheat and steal, they curse and swear, they waylay and maltreat the stranger; and do you wonder at that when they know no better, and they're following the wicked ways of man? They're all breeds but the best, and mostly vagabonds; not but what I saw many decent-like dogs at the West End, playing on the door-steps and in the Parks, though some of these sought indeed to drive me from the door. But, as I was saying, my heart grieved for the creatures with neither house nor home, and many a crust I gave them when I had a hungry belly myself, when I saw them standing in the street, maybe sniffing the steam of the cookshop, and licking their chops with their eyes full of grief and longing."

Here the speaker's eye fell upon a young girl who had re-entered the kitchen and was listening attentively to his monologue.

"And praise be to God, there's the very sweet face I was thinking of—more bloom to it, and a brave gentleman to kiss it all in good time. I'm talking, darling, of the poor wandering outcasts of the earth. I was wondering whether you would take a present from a poor man like myself, that has more children than he can manage, and more mouths than he can feed."

While he spoke Angus had shuffled over to the door; opening it now he gave a low whistle. The signal was immediately responded to by no less than four different animals of the canine species. First there ran in, wagging his tail very rapidly, a wretched-looking cur of no particular breed, which Angus addressed as Shemus or James, and bade him lie down in a corner; next stalked in a doleful-looking, white dog, not unlike a French poodle, but very dirty and disreputable indeed. Thirdly, a collie pup, very long in the legs and soft in the head. Lastly, with his tail between his legs, and his whole air expressive of disgust, a small black and white terrier, very small, and prettily formed.

"That's Shemus, and you all know him well," said Angus, as they entered one by one; "and this is Phemus Ban, and who doesn't know Phemus between this and Stornoway? and the next is wee Duncan, Donacha Dhu's son and heir; and the last—see to him, darling, how he looks at once to yourself—is the dog I was speaking about. He's a clever child, though his troubles have preyed heavily upon his mind, and if you'll take him, I'll give him to you, with my blessing—he'll make a brave beast to run after a bonnie young lady like yourself."

One might have almost fancied that the wretched object in question knew every word that Angus was saying, for, crouched up on the ground, he looked with a curious eye at the girl. Wet with rain, worn with fatigue, and possibly very hungry, he looked by no means a desirable acquisition; but there was something in his forlorn face

which appealed to pity, and Mina (as the girl was called) took him at once on her lap and began to caress him. He received her advances without enthusiasm, sullenly awaiting the issue of the conversation.

"Poor little fellow," said Mina. "Is he hungry?"

"I'll ask him," said Angus, quietly. "Are you hungry, billie?"

The dog, as if he understood the question, thrust out his tongue to lick his wet jaws, and slightly wagged his tail.

"He says he's ready for his supper," cried Angus, interpreting; "though he's had many a scrap by the road. It's low spirits, darling, not hunger, that's the matter with him."

"What's he low-spirited about?" asked the Doctor.

"Ask your own heart, Doctor John," returned Angus, "what you would be low-spirited about, if you had gone altogether wrong and were wandering among strangers. Dogs are like men, they can be sorry as well as hungry, lonely as well as frightened, dull in the spirits as well as cold in the skin. I found him up a dark entry in the city of Glasgow, sleeping alone out of the cold in a place where I went to sleep myself, for not a soul would give a decent man a bed; and he was starving, and I gave him meat; and he was cold, and I warmed him here on my own naked flesh. Then I thought I'd bring him back with me to Uribol, as a present to the colleen with the bird's voice; for look you, darling" (here he addressed himself to Mina), "the dog is a good dog, with real blood in him, though he had fallen on evil ways. It's not me that would come here asking your acceptance of a beast of no quality, after all you've done and said to me and mine."

Thereupon, better to illustrate the "game" qualities of the animal, Angus proceeded to lift him by various parts of his person successively—by the tip of the ear, by the mouth, by the skin of the neck, by the tip of the tail—all which indignities the unfortunate stranger bore without a murmur, though his eye was fixed as if in sullen protest on the face of the mendicant.

"There!" said Angus, in a tone of approbation. "You'll never regret his keep. It'll do your heart good to see him on rats, darling, and the weasel doesn't walk he won't face. You'll find him a constant source of diversion, and much sport he'll bring you."

Although this last recommendation could scarcely be said to have much weight, seeing that Mina's favourite diversions were certainly not that of rat-killing or vermin-hunting, Angus obviously thought that he had triumphantly shown the preciousness of the prize. Meanwhile Mina was feeding the little outcast with scraps of meat.

One word as to Angus's peculiar taste, from which he received his popular name. It must not be imagined for a moment that he was a dog-fancier, or dealer in dogs; nothing of the sort; he kept dogs about him simply because he loved them, and one animal of the species was generally to him as good as another. He knew a first-

rate breed when he saw it, and often turned a good penny by selling a fine specimen to this or that gentleman; for his knowledge and good faith were trusted. Any houseless dog, however, was sure of his protection till he could get an owner for it; the wretcher and uglier it was, the more it seemed to move his compassion. He was a severe but a just master, with a singular power of eliciting the best qualities of a dog. Many an utterly stupid dog was handed over to Angus as a last resource, and given back to the owner after a month or two thoroughly reclaimed and enlightened.

Speaking generally, however, Angus had no regular profession, not even that of a mendicant. He belonged to that almost extinct class of persons, the Fools, who were regarded in the Highlands as under the special protection of the Almighty, and entitled to "bite and sup" wherever they chose to pause and rest in their pilgrimages.

Many of these Fools were utter idiots; others again, like Angus, were incomprehensible persons, so shrewd and clever in a thousand ordinary matters, and so wild and eccentric in one or two particulars—notably as to dress and personal bearing. In either case, they were generally strong, able-bodied men, capable of enduring infinite privation and fatigue. They came and went as they listed, as if blown by a divine breath and under the divine care. No man molested them; few or none denied them their crust, their drop of milk, and their night's shelter.

All his life Angus had wandered about the islands, and especially about Uribol; and that life had, on the whole, been a happy one. He was not lonely, for he had his dogs—his "children," as he called them—for company, and there was always some new member of his family to train and instruct. He never suffered them to steal even so much as a bone, but educated them virtuously, with the greatest care and tenderness. He was indeed, after his own dim lights, a creature of unblemished honour; ever priding himself, as we have seen, on his character of "decent man," though never forgetting that he possessed a certain divine privilege to receive alms, if he demanded it, "for the love of God." Through cold and wet, through storm and snow, by land and water, in all weathers, he wandered with his little family. At night, the dogs nestled round his body, giving and taking warmth. Most of his meals were doled for their sake, and often he would sit by hungry and see them eat, showing, in his treatment of these dumb things, the nicest honour, the most fatherly care, and the tenderest affection.

Of late years he had taken to wandering far from the land of his birth, and had assumed more of the habits and ways of professional beggars. His desire, as he said, was "to see the world." In the course of this laudable pursuit, he received, as most men do when they first wander out world-seeing, a good deal of rough treatment and sorry dishallucination. He was not daunted, although he

speedily discovered that he was denied abroad the privileges which he had enjoyed from time immemorial at home ; he attributed the fact to the ignorance and inferiority of strangers, and merely compassionated their unhappy condition. To his poor wandering wits the world was wonderful and beautiful. Roaming in the lowland districts of Ayrshire, or on the banks of the Clyde, he felt as far from home and kindred, as mighty a traveller over the earth, as others do who explore the American prairie, or wander along the great wall of China. He was among a strange people, in a far land, speaking with difficulty a foreign tongue. In the course of his happy pilgrimages—happy with all their privations, because he thoroughly enjoyed them—he had, as we have seen, gone as far south as Glasgow ; and the sight of the great city had been a wonder and a portent great enough to last the poor wanderer all the rest of his life.

Angus would have talked on by the hour, but the Priest now interposed, and insisted that the whole party should retire for the night. The house consisted of only two chambers ; in the back one, where the Priest slept, a bed had been prepared for the Doctor ; while Mina and Kirsty accommodated themselves, it is no business of ours to tell where or how, in the great kitchen. As for Angus—with the dogs, he was lighted out to his usual sleeping-place, the byre, where, on a deep warm bed of fresh straw, surrounded by his children, he slept such sleep, and dreamed such dreams, as Solomon in all his glory never enjoyed, and as are granted only to a clear conscience, an innocent mind, and a gentle heart.

THE BOOKWORM.

—♦—
" *Munera pulveris.*"

We flung the close-kept casement wide ;
The myriad atom-play
Streamed, with the mid-day's glancing tide,
Across him as he lay ;
Only the unused summer gust
Moved the thin hair of Dryasdust.

The notes he writ were barely dry ;
The entering breeze's breath
Fluttered the fruitless casuistry,
Checked at the leaf where Death—
The final commentator—thrust
His cold " Here endeth Dryasdust."

O fool and blind ! The leaf that grew,
The opening bud, the trees,
The face of men, he nowise knew,
Or careless turned from these
To delve, in folios' rust and must,
The tomb he lived in, dry as dust.

He left, for mute Salmasius,
The lore a child may teach,—
For saws of dead Libanius,
The sound of uttered speech ;
No voice had pierced the sheep-skin crust
That bound the heart of Dryasdust.

And so, with none to close his eyes,
And none to mourn him dead,
He in his dumb book-Babel lies
With grey dust garmented.
Let be ; pass on. It is but just—
These were thy gods, O Dryasdust !

Dig we his grave where no birds greet,—
He loved no song of birds ;
Lay we his bones where no men meet,—
He loved no spoken words ;
For him no "storied urn" or "bust ;"—
Write his *Hic jacet* in the Dust.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

A CHAPTER FROM THE LIFE OF AN ARCH-CONSPIRATOR.

PIERRE LENET was a born conspirator, if ever there was one. And he had the happiness to live in times which offered a field for the activity he delighted in, such as perhaps no other period and no other society ever equalled in that respect. He was born at Dijon in the early years of the seventeenth century. The exact date of his birth is not ascertainable. But as he became *procureur-général* of the parliament of Dijon by the cession of his father in the year 1637, he could not have been born much after the beginning of the century. He died at Paris on the 3rd of July, 1671. His family had belonged for generations to the *noblesse de robe*. His father and grandfather were both presidents of the parliament of Dijon. It might be imagined that the position of magistrate in a country town, together with the additional staidness which might be supposed to be derived from such family connections and associations, would have ensured to a man, whatever his natural inclinations might be, a life of peaceful usefulness and humdrum monotony. But anybody so imagining would have left out of his consideration the strange state of France during that wonderful time of the Fronde—a time when it was quite on the cards that footmen and ladies'-maids might come to exercise an important influence on public events and on the fortunes of princes; when the only persons of whom it could be said that it was *not* on the cards that they should exercise any such influence were the millions of *manants*, the cultivators of the soil, who constituted the mass of the population of France; a time when the natural mode of proceeding of one who sought to earwig an archbishop, was to bribe the right reverend father's favourite; when all dignitaries, potentates, powers, and persons in authority, seemed to be playing a huge game of puss-in-the-corner; when all society was dancing the hays, and every body and thing was in the place where they might least be expected to be found; when perhaps more completely than at any other time that history tells us of, the idea of duty was extinct, and men and women acted, and almost openly and wholly avowed that they acted, on no other motive save the consideration of what they conceived to be their interest and the gratification of their passions; a time when everybody constantly strove to deceive every other person engaged in the huge confused game, and when deception was so much a matter of course that those who were deceived felt little

or no resentment against those who had deceived them when the deceit was discovered—a bad time, a thoroughly bad and despicable time, but an extremely interesting one, and, above all, a highly picturesque one.

It is also a specially difficult time to understand—as it might be supposed it would be, even from what has here been said of it. When everybody, high and low, conspicuous and obscure, was busying himself, and effectually busying himself with plots, schemes, intrigues of every sort, when the women were as active and quite as influential as the men (for this is a notable specialty of the Fronde period), it may be imagined that the skein becomes a complex and a ravelled one. The consequence is, that of all the times and social conditions described by history, this Fronde time is one of the least satisfactorily understood by those whose reading is confined to the pages of the great historians. It is impossible that their works, let them have striven as they might to clothe the dry bones of what used to be called history with flesh and blood, should, by the general view to which they are necessarily limited, give their readers not only any accurate understanding of all the pulling of the wires which led to great and important events, but, what is far more worth having, any lively picture of the sort of way in which men and women were then living, and talking, and thinking, and acting. Fortunately, no period was ever richer in writers of memoirs. So many had stories to tell. So many, when left high and dry in their old age by the stream of active life, had no other occupation or consolation than the telling of them. But it is a case of an *embarras de richesses*. Few, indeed, are the readers in the present day who can dream of coping with the mass of narrative which the French *mémoire* writers of the seventeenth century have left us. Life is too full and too short. But there is the complete living picture of that strange time embedded in those thousands of pages. And if one could succeed in detaching a scene or two, and fitting them into such a manageable size and form as would furnish a magic-lantern slide, without loss of the colour of the original figures and facts, such a peep might suffice to give a reader a more living and concrete notion of this portion of French history than he has ever gathered from his previous studies.

On the 18th of January, 1650, an event happened which fell like a thunderbolt in the midst of the French world, and filled with amazement not only the Court and Paris, but the whole of France. This was the sudden and totally unexpected arrest of “the Princes.” The reader of the French history of that period will meet with frequent reference to that event, and to a great variety of other facts as happening to, or performed by, “the Princes.” The personages thus designated *par excellence* were Louis II. of Bourbon, Prince de Condé, and his younger brother, Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti. The former was the man known in French history as the Grand

Condé. He was the great-grandson of Charles of Bourbon, Duke of Vendôme, and was the head of that branch of the Bourbons. "The Princes," therefore, so-called as being princes of the blood royal. Condé had done much to deserve the title of "Great." Voltaire says of him that he was "a born general." He delivered France from a great danger when, with much inferior forces, and giving battle against the advice of his council, he beat the Spaniards in the memorable fight of Rocroi, destroying in that and subsequent victories the famous Spanish infantry, at that day considered the finest in the world. Louis XIII. died in 1642. Rocroi was fought on the 19th of May, 1643. So that Condé was, perhaps fortunately for himself and for France, absent from Paris when the first troubles of the Fronde broke out. It is probable that he would have ranged himself on the side opposed to Cardinal Mazarin and the Court had he then been at leisure to busy himself with the intestine discords of his country.

Of course there could be little sympathy between any of the *Grands Seigneurs* of France, the remains of the old feudal nobility which Richelieu had so successfully crushed, and Mazarin. Richelieu was hated and feared. Mazarin was hated and despised. Nevertheless, when Condé, having vanquished the foreign enemies of France, and obtained an advantageous peace, ventured to Paris, and when both parties to the struggle, which was going on between Mazarin and the Court on the one hand, against the Parliament and the Frondeurs on the other, were eager to enlist the hero on their side, he took the side of the Court, probably from a real patriotic sense of duty, and contributed largely to that first pacification, which was, after all, but a hollow truce. Overt violence was stayed, but plotting went on only the more actively on all sides. Mazarin was hated equally by the Parliament and by the *Grands Seigneurs*. The *Noblesse de l'Épée* and the *Noblesse de Robe* were equally against him. And the fact that he was able, amid such difficulties, to maintain his power so long, is a very curious and suggestive testimony to the efficacy of the work which his great predecessor, Richelieu, had accomplished.

But if Condé deemed it his duty to lend the weight of his name and influence to the support of the Court against the malcontent Frondeurs and Parliament, it did not follow that he was to dissemble his disgust at the spectacle of France and the French chivalry ruled by the rod of an intriguing cardinal, or to brook the insolently ambitious projects of the upstart priest. Accordingly, he was not sparing of mordant criticism and biting ridicule of every part of Mazarin's administration. And he especially exerted himself and plotted to prevent the marriage which the Cardinal was extremely anxious to bring about between his niece and the Duc de Mercœur.

These are the causes to which French historians generally attribute the sudden arrest of "the Princes" on the 18th of July, 1650. But there was another cause—one of those back-stair causes which history

is very apt to miss, unless she seeks for them in the pages of comparatively obscure *mémoire* writers—which seems to have led immediately to the catastrophe. Among the gentlemen who “served” Condé, was one Jarzé, who had conceived an absurd notion that the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, looked on him with eyes of affection, and absolutely sent her a declaration of love! The Queen took the first opportunity of reading him a severe lecture before all the Court, ending by commanding him never to come into her sight again. Condé most unreasonably, moved probably by a desire of picking a quarrel with Mazarin, chose to consider himself affronted by the disgrace put upon his follower; and, demanding an interview with the minister, insolently required that Jarzé should be received by the Queen that very evening. Anne submitted; but it is easy to imagine what must have been her feelings while doing so. Nevertheless, so important, so startling a step as the arrest of the victor of Rocroi was not to be undertaken lightly; and it was thought necessary to procure the consent of Gaston, the late king’s brother, who was lieutenant-général of the kingdom. To this end Anne wrote with her own hand a note to Gondi, that most extraordinary of archbishops, who is better known in history as the Cardinal de Retz. Gondi was at that time one of the most popular men in Paris, and a leader of the opposition in the Parliament. The summons of the Queen, however, brought him to her at once; the terms of a coalition between the Fronde and the Court were quickly agreed upon, and Gondi undertook, and succeeded in, the task of obtaining Gaston’s consent to the proposed step. That obtained, the Queen did not hesitate an instant in signing the fatal order, which was the cause of a new series of troubles and civil war to the unhappy country. “The Princes” were arrested as they were leaving the Palais Royal, and were safely lodged in Vincennes before a soul in Paris knew anything about it. From Vincennes the prisoners were removed to Marcoussy, and thence to Havre. They were three in number—Condé himself, his brother the Prince de Conti, and the Duc de Longueville, who had married their sister, and who must always be understood to be included in the mention of “the Princes,” so often met with in the records of those times. Condé was born in 1621, and was therefore twenty-nine years old at the time of his arrest.

Immense was the sensation produced all over France when this extraordinary news became known. People could not believe their ears. Nobody knew what it meant, or what it portended. But especially the news fell like a thunderbolt in Burgundy, and Dijon, the capital of it. That was Condé’s special country; there were the principal castles and strong places belonging to him; there was the greatest number of the closest friends and adherents of his family; there the chief seat of his influence.

Now our friend Pierre Lenet, and his fathers before him, had always

been special friends and followers of the Condés ; and Pierre himself had been particularly distinguished by the present Prince, who, among other marks of favour, had been godfather to one of his children. And Lenet, whatever else he may have been, now in the time of his patron's adversity proved himself a faithful friend and most devoted partizan. Nor was he a man to be content with wringing his hands and lamenting, while keeping quiet to see how matters would go, like most of the rest of his fellow-townsmen. He instantly conceived projects of the widest and most audacious scope for the recovery of his patron's liberty. He aimed at nothing less than raising such a flame throughout the country as should produce a civil war, the first result of which should be the destruction of Mazarin.

Lenet had been on the point of starting from Dijon for Paris. The last thing before leaving the town he went to the castle, to take leave of the two commanders, to whose joint care Condé had committed it, and to enable himself to give his patron an account of the state of his fortress. This was on the 21st of January, 1650. He found the two officers—Bussiére and Comeau their names were—in a strange state of agitation. For awhile they would not tell Lenet what it was that was moving them. But at last they let out the fact, that a courtier had that morning reached the castle with tidings of the arrest of the Princes !

Lenet's first thought was to encourage these men to be firm in doing their duty to the Prince ; he inquired into the condition of the castle and its means of defence, and treated it as a matter of course that they would hold it against all comers to the last extremity. Then abandoning the idea of his journey, he set himself to consider what best could be done in Dijon. Thinking over the matter as he walked home, he tells us that it appeared to him beyond all doubt that a "general revolution in favour of the Prince and against the Cardinal would declare itself, and that twenty-four hours would not pass without bringing tidings of a rising. Still less could I doubt," he goes on to say, "that we should be able to excite in Burgundy, by means of the strongholds, the friends, and the troops the Prince possessed there, similar movements to those which I foresaw in Paris ; which would give the example to the neighbouring provinces, and especially to Champagne, which was under the government of the Prince de Conti. I thought, too, that Normandy, where the government and most part of the strong places were in the hands of the Duc de Longueville, or of his relations, where he had many friends, and where there was much discontent, would at once declare itself, as well as Guienne or Provence, where the disaffection of last year was by no means altogether healed."

He goes on to assign sundry other reasons for feeling sure that this, that, and the other part of the country would assuredly rise.

Nevertheless, there was some reason to fear that a formidable rising might have the result of causing Mazarin to put the Princes to death in their prison. But, on mature reflection, he came to the conclusion that the Cardinal was not the man to dare any so violent a measure, "particularly if the young Duc d'Enghien (Condé's son), the Princess Dowager (his mother), the Princesse de Condé (she was a niece of Richelieu), and the Duchess of Longueville remained at liberty, as was confidently reported to be the case, and if they could withdraw themselves out of the reach of the Court."

"I at once therefore despatched a courier with three letters for the three Princesses." It is curious to observe the *capable* man thus taking command of the family interests in the time of storm. Lenet had never held any particular office in the household of the Prince, or had ever been in a position either in the world generally, or in his relations with the Prince's family, to make it natural that he should thus put himself forward to say what should be done in the critical circumstances in which the family was placed; but he felt himself to be the man that was needed, and seized the opportunity of launching himself on a sea of plots, and intrigues, and adventures, which made up exactly the sort of life for which he was fitted, and calculated to shine in. Not that Lenet was altogether so much a stranger to the *grand monde* as another *procureur-général* of a provincial parliament would in all probability have been. The special favour of Condé had often kept him near his person, and the credit and influence he was supposed to enjoy with the Prince caused his acquaintance to be sought by all the crowd of young nobles of both sexes, who, for one reason or another, wished to pay court to the young hero of Rocroi. Thus we find him to have been an intimate friend and companion of Bussy Rabutin, Madame Sevigné's well-known cousin; and there is a letter in verse extant, which Lenet and Bussy wrote conjointly to Madame Sevigné and her husband when they were rusticising in Brittany. This epistle made rather a *succès de société* in its day; and as French critics have praised it, and it is a good specimen of the sort of literary play which was then so much in fashion in French society, the reader is here presented with an English version of it—

"TO M. LE MARQUIS AND MDE. LA MARQUISE SEVIGNÉ.

"To you, good friends, who've taken root
In Brittany, a kind salute!
You stay-at-homes in every season,
Who love your fields beyond all reason,
Greeting and health! Although observe
This letter's more than you deserve.
Yet moved by ancient feelings friendly,
In pity these few lines we send ye,
Being loath to see your primest hours
Obscurely pass 'mid village bores,

And grieved that at Rochers * you waste
 Moments your friends would keenly taste.
 Perhaps your minds, quite tranquil grown,
 Now censure all the fuss of town ;
 And 'mid your fields, afar from riot,
 Enjoy pure laziness in quiet.
 Perhaps your plan, to us so comic,
 May have good reasons economic ;
 Your rustic life may find excuses
 If doubled rent-roll it produces.
 Then 'tis no doubt a pleasant thing
 To be kotoo'd to like the king,
 And to be named full reverently
 Conjointly with his majesty
 At fair or dance, or when the priest
 Uplifts his voice at some church feast,
 And says, ' Let's pray with one accord
 For our good king, and noble lord ;
 And for his lady, that she be
 From childbirth perils safe and free ;
 Likewise for all their offspring dear
 From this time forth for many a year !
 If any person here desires
 To rent the farm the lease expires
 To-day at noon, when he may meet
 My Lord, upon the affair to treat.
 A *De Profundis* now rehearse
 For all his noble forefathers.'
 (Although for aught that we can tell,
 Said forefathers may be in h—l !)
 Such honours you may seek in vain
 Elsewhere than on your own domain ;
 'Tis something too a tax to raise
 On every beast that *octroi* pays ;
 To sell all manner of permissions
 And walk the foremost in processions ;
 T' assemble folks whene'er your wish,
 To help you hunt, or help you fish ;
 And boors most soundly to belabour
 Who shirk of plough or spade the labour."

There are eight more lines, which contain plays on words impossible to translate. And no doubt the reader has already said, *Oh, jam satis !*

In days long afterwards, when Lenet's plottings and schemings were all over, and he was at length at rest, Madame de Sevigné speaks of him as having had "*de l'esprit comme douze ;*" and again, in another letter, as "our poor friend Lenet, with whom we often laughed so much, for there never was a more laughing youth than ours in every way." Lenet, therefore, knew many people, and was probably no stranger to the three Princesses, whose conduct he put himself forward to direct.

* The name of Madame de Sevigné's home in Brittany.

His letter to the Dowager urged her to come at once with her grandson, the Duc d'Enghien, into Burgundy; that to the young Princesse de Condé begged her to hasten to her father, the Maréchal de Brezé, in Anjou, with a view of raising that province in favour of her husband; and the third despatch, to the Duchesse de Longueville, counselled her to go with all speed to Rouen, for a similar purpose.

Lenet's next care was to see the principal people in Dijon, and ascertain how far they were disposed to second him in raising the standard of revolt against the Government. A bitter disappointment awaited him. It would not be unamusing to follow in the detail with which he has recorded them the different answers he met with from all the provincial city magnates. But to do so would leave us no space for the account of his subsequent proceedings, which are yet more characteristic of the society and manners of the time. Haste to desert a sinking ship is unhappily no special characteristic of any period. One magistrate, who owed everything to Condé, hoped that the Cardinal would not fail to put to death prisoners who were such dangerous enemies to the State. Another contented himself with sighing sadly as he twirled his thumbs, and expressing his profound conviction that the best thing they could do in the interest of the prisoners was to keep cautiously quiet, and strictly refrain from saying anything or doing anything. A third would have been ready for anything had it not been that unfortunately he was just then threatened with a fit of the gout. The most favourable reply he got, was that of an old priest, who promised him his prayers!

Among the officers of the troops depending on Condé, to whom Lenet next applied, he found a somewhat more hopeful reception. And it was finally agreed that a portion of them should throw themselves into the strong fortress of Bellegarde, while one large regiment of eighteen hundred men should persuade the Court that it was fully purposed to be faithful to the Crown, while in reality they would be ready to seize the first opportunity of striking a blow in favour of the Princes. An attempt to introduce a portion of this regiment into the castle of Dijon was frustrated, not by the fidelity of the two commandants either to Condé or to the Crown, but by their cautious timidity.

It is curiously characteristic of the strange anarchical confusion of the times to find these regimental officers consulting, plotting with, and taking directions from this lawyer, whose only sort of title to meddle in the affair at all, was the known fact that he was an adherent and friend of the Prince!

These matters thus arranged, Lenet awaited with such patience as he could muster the return of the courier he had sent to the Princesses. In a day or two he returned, but brought no letters from them. The Dowager only sent him a verbal message. She had read, and immediately burned, the courier said, the letter from Lenet, and had done

the same by the letter he had written to the young Princess, saying that she was not of an age to be trusted with such a matter. For herself, she said that the smallest movement on her part would cause them all to be thrown into prison; that the friends of the family might act as they, or any of them, should think best; that, for her part, her only hope was to end her days in peace, and, if possible, in liberty; that the remainder of her life could but be spent in weeping the misfortunes of her house, but that she would not hazard the smallest step which could bring on her the risk of spending it in prison. Finally, she begged Lenet not to write to her any more.

Here was, as Lenet says, an end to all his hope of raising Burgundy in revolt. It could only have been done by the Princess Dowager showing herself in the province, and putting herself at its head. But for any such rôle as this she was far too timid, and, as he insinuates, too stingy of money.

As for the Duchesse de Longueville, she was already off to Stenay, a place of surety. A very different woman indeed from her mother was she! No plotter or intriguer of any kind could have wished a better helpmate in petticoats than the beautiful Duchess. To use a vulgar phrase, which, however, characterises her better than any other, she was "up to anything, from" . . . what you please to what you will. It was of her that Rochefoucauld (who, however, at this period was called Prince de Marsillac, but became Duc de Rochefoucauld shortly afterwards by the death of his father) wrote the often-quoted lines:—

"Pour mériter son cœur, pour plaire à ses beaux yeux,
J'ai fait la guerre aux rois, je l'aurais fait aux cieux."

Which may be Englished—

"To touch that heart of hers, to find favour in her eyes,
I've braved the power of kings, and would have braved the skies."

And it was to his *faits et gestes* on this occasion that he was alluding. The Court, it would seem, had come to the resolution to arrest her and Rochefoucauld at the same time that the Princes her brothers and her husband were arrested. But they both found hiding-places; and that same night Rochefoucauld contrived to get her out of Paris, and ride with her into Normandy. He and she, no less sanguine than Lenet, imagined that all Normandy would rise in favour of the Princes at the sight of her. But, instead of that, she ran the greatest risk of being herself arrested. And it was with great difficulty, and after many dangers, that Rochefoucauld got her safe off to Stenay, and then rode into his own government of Poitou, and did his utmost to induce the *noblesse* of that and the neighbouring districts of Angoumois and Saintonge to rise in revolt against the Cardinal and the Court. And this was all for no other motive than that boasted

of in his well-known couplet; for he had no share whatever in the quarrel, except as the well-known lover of Condé's sister.

The Duchess remained at Stenay during the whole time of the imprisonment of her brothers and husband, and has, therefore, no share in the ulterior development of busy lawyer Lenet's further plots and plans.

There were memories of old times which made Anne of Austria unwilling to order the arrest of the Dowager Princess of Condé; and, besides, Mazarin knew her to be timid, unenterprising, and loving her ease, and little likely to become dangerous. As to the young Princess, Condé's wife, Mazarin could hardly bring himself to order the arrest of Richelieu's niece. She was, moreover, young, inexperienced, without resources either in money or friends, and, besides, by no means very perfectly contented with her husband's treatment of her. He had married her only in obedience to the strong wishes of the late king, and she had never been the mistress of his heart. Mazarin thought that she might safely be left at liberty. Her son, the Duc d'Enghien, was only seven years old, and could not well be separated from his mother. The two princesses, therefore, and the child were ordered to live in strict retirement at the Prince's château of Chantilly.

Under these circumstances, Lenet made up his mind to quit Burgundy and go to Chantilly; but determined to take Châtillon sur Loing on his way, in order to see the Duchess of Châtillon, who had, as he knew, great influence over the Dowager Princess Condé. On reaching Châtillon, he found that the Duchess had already left it, travelling Paris-ward; but, hastening after her, he overtook her between Nemours and Fontainebleau. The Duchess made him get into her carriage, and they continued their journey together—as strangely assorted a couple as ever made a *tête-à-tête* journey together!

One would like to have a sketch of the scene, when this overtaking between Nemours and Fontainebleau took place. Lawyer Lenet in his grave, black professional suit bowing at the door of the Duchess's huge painted and gilded coach, while an extremely pretty face, all anxiety and eagerness for news, leans forward from the depths of the back seat, and the four great cart-horses enjoy the pause in their labour of dragging the machine through the quagmires of the execrable road. As for the conversation between the fellow-travellers, when Lenet has accepted the seat in the Duchess's carriage, when his own post-horse, with the accompanying postilion on another horse, has been sent back to the last post-house, and the four Châtillon cart-horse-like carriage-horses have got into motion again, dragging the heavy vehicle at a foot's-pace, groaning, creaking, and lurching in the deep ruts, we have a full account of it from the gentleman. But in order to understand rightly why M. Lenet had thought it expedient to call on the Duchess on his way to Chantilly, it will be necessary

to tell the reader, in as few words as may be, a fragment or two of the lady's history.

She had been a Mademoiselle de Bouteville, of the great house of Montmorency, and one of the most celebrated beauties of that day. Condé and Coligny (who at the death of the maréchal his father became Duc de Châtillon) both fell desperately in love with her. The latter one day opened his heart to his friend Condé, and declared that nothing had prevented him from asking for the hand of La Bouteville save the knowledge that he (the Prince) was fond of her. Thereupon Condé "*reçut tendrement cette déclaration, lui promit de se départir de son amour, et de n'avoir plus que de l'amitié pour elle, telle qu'il l'avoit pour lui.*" Such promises, remarks Lenet, are rarely kept. Nevertheless, Condé kept his to Châtillon. Whether he were enabled to do so, adds he, by the empire over himself which virtue gave him, or whether it was due to his falling in love with Mademoiselle de Vigean, or with Mademoiselle de Poncey, he (Lenet) cannot say. But he thinks it was owing to the last-named lady, because the Prince once told him that he "*se fut embarqué à l'aimer,*" only because Laval had boasted of the favours he had received from her.

It is but fair, too, to admit—as does not seem to have occurred to Lenet—that the sequel showed that, strange as it might seem, such virtue as was shown in being true to his promise really had some influence upon his conduct. For when the Duc de Châtillon died, which was not long afterwards, Condé renewed his suit to the widowed Duchess; while she on her part—— But Lenet's speculations on her motives are so very characteristic of the time, that they must be given in his own words. "Whether it were," he says, "that she reciprocated his feelings, or whether she was moved by the glory of being loved by so famous a hero, or whether *by consideration of the profit that might accrue to her from the influence that she might acquire over his mind*, she was well disposed to furnish all the matter necessary to the keeping up of his flame."

The third of the above causes is curiously in accordance with all that we know of the ways and habits of that day.

The matter was complicated, however, by the violent passion of the young and remarkably handsome Duc de Nemours for the widowed Duchess. And it was generally supposed that he did not sigh in vain. "And it was this," says Lenet, "that caused the Duchess to waver between her inclination and her interest." He speaks, it will be observed, on this occasion, as on all others when he mentions her, without the slightest notion of casting a shadow of blame on her in the matter. It is noticeable, too, that he seems to assume as quite a matter of course that her "inclination" was *not* for the Prince de Condé. "She found the means," continues Lenet, "to keep them both in hand up to the time of the Prince's imprisonment, and as long as it lasted she did so yet more effectually, and, after it

had ceased, up to the death of the Duc de Nemours." After that event, at any rate, came the Prince's turn. He had waited for two reversions; and when at last the second vacancy occurred, the Duchess became his recognised mistress.

Such was the lady who was now inviting Lawyer Lenet to travel *tête-à-tête* with her to Paris, and thence to Chantilly. Of course each had much to tell the other. Each knew that the other was entirely to be trusted as regarded the interests of the Princes. The Duchess, when she had heard what Lenet had to tell her of his doings and disappointments in Burgundy, and of his communications with the Princesses at Chantilly, "gave me an exact plan of the present state of affairs; and, among other things, told me that although there had been a coldness between Nemours and Condé, the former, with that perfect generosity which was peculiar to him, had determined to serve the Prince in his misfortune by every possible means, and that she (the Duchess) would take care to keep him up to his good resolutions. They had talked of all the personages whom they could hope to influence by every sort of means that could be brought to bear on them. Such a one could be made to believe that the Court had no intention of gratifying his ambition and cupidity in this or that matter. Another could be worked on by such and such a noted beauty, who could in turn be influenced by her inclination for somebody else. The embers of disaffection, half slumbering among the members of such and such a provincial parliament, might be fanned into flame by such and such unscrupulous representations. A lady all powerful with the governor of another province might be won by flattering her hopes of making such and such a great marriage for her daughter." Such a mixture of what may be called male politics, with matters generally supposed to belong to the sphere of female politics, was never known before. . . . or after!

The next day but one, having succeeded, by dint of great care, in passing through Paris without attracting any attention, they arrived at Chantilly, and were received with open arms by the somewhat *triste* and forlorn household there. The château was filled with women of high condition, without a man of any rank or authority among them. And it is curious to see how they throw themselves upon Lenet, how they look to him for guidance, and submit to be led by him. The Dowager burst into tears on seeing him, and was voluble as to her perfect innocence, and the baseness and ingratitude of the Court and of Mazarin. She complained bitterly of their present position, and declared that they could not be sure even of the fidelity of the domestics in the château. And she specially cautioned Lenet that they did not speak of affairs to the young Princess except in general terms.

As soon as ever she—the younger Princess, Condé's wife—could get an opportunity of speaking to Lenet *tête-à-tête*, she complained

bitterly of this. Lenet found her to be a very different woman from her mother-in-law—totally free from the older lady's timidity and selfish wish for her own personal ease and quiet, and indeed in every way far fitter to share the cares and dangers and plots and plans incidental to such a state of things than her husband's mother, who wished to treat her as a baby in all concerning them. She told Lenet that what she dreaded above all else was that they would take her boy, the young Duc d'Enghien, from her, as had been threatened. She begged him piteously to contrive some means of averting such a misfortune, and declared herself ready to take any steps that might be considered for the advantage of her husband, to go with her son anywhere, even to place herself at the head of an army, if it were thought desirable, with her son beside her—but not to be separated from him. The fact was, says Lenet, with very business-like coolness, that she was anxious to do something, or sacrifice herself in some way, in the hope of gaining the approbation of her husband, who had never looked on her very kindly.

There is something pathetic in the position of the poor young wife, in the midst of that household of women-conspirators in her husband's favour by plots, from participation in which she was excluded, while the Duchesse de Châtillon, whose relation towards the Prince was well known, was there as if she were naturally one of the family, and was a leader in all their councils.

Lenet encouraged her in these "reasonable sentiments," as he says, and promised all that was asked of him in reference to her son, because, although he knew the "calibre of her genius" was not equal to the conduct of such great affairs as they might be called upon to handle, he felt that "they might have need of this Princess and her young son." Besides, there was in the château a Comtesse de Tourville, of the Rochefoucauld family, whom Condé had assigned to his wife as her companion, and whom Lenet knew to be a woman that might be depended on for any amount of conduct and resolution in any circumstances. From this lady Lenet learned, he says, many things very necessary for his guidance in dealing with both the Princesses. There was also the Marquise de Gonville, "pretty, young, and full of talent," who was the daughter of the Comtesse de Tourville, and who was also a member of the family circle at Chantilly. Then there was the Dame de Bourgneuf, who had the care of the Longueville children, and who was in constant correspondence with the hare-brained and beautiful Duchess, and from whom Lawyer Lenet "learned many things that it was important to me to know."

Besides the six ladies who have been named, "all the rest of the Court of the Princesses was composed of their ladies and maids of honour, all pretty and agreeable," says Lenet, "but too young all of them to be trusted with the secret of affairs."

Among all this bevy of ladies there was not any single man of their

own rank. There was a young priest, the Abbé Roquette, whose piety and demure manners, and his quality of nephew to a certain nun who enjoyed a high reputation for sanctity, had strongly recommended him to the Princess Dowager. He ran about the house like a tame cat, and was quite edifying by the unction of his devotional practices, until, one unlucky day, he was caught confessing one of the maids of honour in her own chamber, under circumstances which the matrons in the château deemed to indicate a too great devotion on the part of the young lady. There was also Dulmas, who had formerly been squire to the Princess Dowager, and was now captain of the handful of troops who garrisoned the château. But all he thought of was the secure keeping of his present snug berth and easy position; and with that view never failed to say any word he could, tending to confirm his mistress in her disposition to think that doing nothing and keeping quite quiet was the best possible policy. There was Girard, the Prince's secretary, who, says Lenet, had not been thought worth imprisoning with his master. But little passed between him and the ladies, for the Dowager particularly disliked him. There was also Bourdelot, the Prince's physician, a person of much talent and high consideration, who, according to Lenet, was more of a man than any of those who passed for such at Chantilly. He was the only one, indeed, in whom Lenet found any capacity or disposition to second him in his designs. He had been at Rome, where he had become intimately acquainted with the Cardinal Barberini. And he now wrote pressing letters to that prelate, urging him to use his credit with the Pope, Julius the Third, to induce his holiness, who was no friend to Cardinal Mazarin, to interfere in Condé's favour.

It does not need any very strong effort of imagination to picture to oneself the life in the château of Chantilly, so charmingly situated among its woods and waters. And probably we should not be wrong in imagining upon the whole that the strangely-constituted party was not a very miserable one. The old Princess wept and wrung her hands from time to time no doubt, though there are evidences that even she was not altogether absorbed by the miseries of the present time—evidences curious enough, with which we may perhaps amuse our readers upon some future occasion. As for the younger members of the circle, there seems to have been no lack of gaiety among them. There were sons, husbands, brothers, and lovers in prison, and the threatened ruin of a great and princely house. There was wherewithal to break the monotony of fashionable court lives, and add a spice of excitement to the passing hours. Then catastrophes of the sort were not uncommon in those days. The path of life was like the roads on which they travelled—full of ups and downs, and sudden shocks, and struggling to pull through difficult passes. And that singular Fronde time had a specialty of its own in this respect: that there was over all their fighting and making friends, their love

affairs and their politics, their hopes and fears, a sort of air of being at play all the time. Nothing seems to have been serious. It was all done *pour rire*. The men seemed rather to like the fighting, and the women unquestionably enjoyed immensely the plotting and intriguing. There can be no doubt that Lenet was quite in earnest in his multifarious endeavours to procure his patron's release. But it cannot be denied that he seemed to have enjoyed his position of arch-plotter in the midst of the crowd of pretty women, all hanging as with an interest of life and death on each new scheme hatched from his busy brain.

For the present we must leave the dapper black figure in the midst of the rainbow-tinted crowd around him; not, however, without the hope of picking another chapter from the life of the arch-conspirator.

T. A. TROLLOPE.

JEAN INGELow.

A GLINT, a glimmer, a gleam,
The gold of the furze, and the bloom of the heather,
The breeze, and the bird, and the stream,
That sing, and that sing together.

The murmur of drowsy bees
In the purple fox-glove bells,
A breath of the clover leas,
A waft from the birchen dells ;

A flash on the cottage pane
From the sun in its westward burning,
A sound of steps in the lane,
And of voices, home returning,

The warmth of a downy nest
With the cushat's coo above it,
Earth at its fairest, best,
With its God to bless and to love it.

DORA GREENWELL.

LITERARY LEGISLATORS.

NO. IV.—MR. VERNON HARCOURT.

Is there under the cope of Heaven—we tread in the steps of the Frenchman who told Sterne he might “immerge” the wig in the Ocean and it would stand—is there under the eye of Heaven anything more wonderful than the self-humbugging capacity of the Englishman, especially in his bumptiousness, and most especially of all in his bumptiousness as a law-abiding personage? What terrific impressions might not posterity receive from Mr. Disraeli’s magniloquent picture (in a recent public speech) of the 10th of April, 1849, when, to use his own choice language, “artillery were planted on Westminster Bridge, and females were not allowed to go abroad in the metropolis of England.” I remember that day, and, taking at that time no interest in politics, thought, as I looked at the fortified Bank of England, what a miserable farce the whole thing was. My neighbour at a dinner-party that evening, said to me, speaking of the “insurgents” who, in the dialect of the reporters of that time, “wended their way” to Kennington Common, “Poor devils! Cannon to *them*? Why you could sneeze them down!” A coarser word than sneeze was used by the “full-fed ruffian” who made the remark—which was a true one—but sneeze will do very well. You *could* have sneezed them down. Nevertheless, mobs of ill-nourished, stunted men have given a good deal of trouble before now, even to disciplined soldiers with cannon and bayonets enough. But it was because the poor insurgents *meant* it. Now the peculiarity of that fine day seemed to me to be that the insurgents did *not* mean it, knew they did not mean it; and that the “party of order” knew they didn’t mean it, and knew they knew they didn’t. In other words, that the whole affair was, to repeat that ugly idiom, humbug. In this country, even then there was so much rapport between the lower and middle class, that no sane shopkeeper or warehouseman ought to have apprehended any real rising of the people accompanied by much violence. If there had been fewer special constables there might have been some casual outbreak from the riff-raff, and no doubt Sykes and the Artful Dodger would have “risen” to the height of the argument, but the tailors and shoemakers who got up the monster petition were merely rehearsing revolution. And in their hearts the party of order knew it. The majority of the great hulk-

ing respectable lubbers who paraded the thoroughfares with staves on that occasion did it out of English bumptiousness, and because they wanted an outing. And yet the Author of "Reverberations" (John Chapman, 1849)—after much fine writing and putting of noble sentiment and far-reaching thought into the mouths of the "full-fed ruffians" supposed to be inflated with conceptions of the Eternal Order and the duty of "full-fed ruffians" to act as special constables, because the asteroids obey the law of gravitation and picking pockets is forbidden—can write like this:—

Thus said the people when the mob arose,
And thus the people did the mob oppose;
 They had their gathering next.
Sound hearts and noble, gentle souls and brave,
The beautiful and strong, the wise and grave,
Are mustering with a fixed resolve to save
 Their country, thus perplex.

They are all bound by one great solemn oath;
To their lov'd fatherland have plighted troth;
 Are steady, silent, strong.
Peer, scholar, poet, craftsman, hind and squire,
Touch'd with some sparkles of the true old fire,
Age with firm tread, and youth with quick desire,
 Move gallantly along.

True, the poet (for whom I have a sincere respect) goes on to admit, in one solitary verse, that there was "scum upon the cauldron's top;" but what always irked me, and I should have thought must have irked all absolutely truthful minds, was the whole mood and attitude of the poem, which I only now take as representative. Equally untruthful, as it appears to me, and from the same point of view, are some of the very best lines of the Laureate's nobly liturgical Ode of the "Burial of the Duke of Wellington." Just let us try and look with patience at the following lines:—

O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself—a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambition's crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.

O good gray head, which all men knew ;
 O voice from which their omens all men drew .

Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ;
 Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow
 Thro' either babbling world of high and low ;
 Whose life was work, whose language rife
 With rugged maxims hewn from life ;
 Who never spoke against a foe ;
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
 All great self-seekers trampling on the right :
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named,
 Truth-lover was our English duke ;
 Whatever record leap to light,
 He never shall be shamed.

Now, in dealing with these verses, there are two things to be allowed for before passing any judgment whatever on their truthfulness. First, we must allow for the just mood of the occasion, which legitimately demands a favourable perspective for what was best in the departed ; and, secondly, we must allow something for the conservative-bourgeois point of view, which is Mr. Tennyson's political point of departure (of course the general circuit of his mind is liberal). But, when we have made these allowances, will any clear-sighted man lay his hand upon his heart, and affirm that these lives fairly, even for a funeral dirge, represent the Duke of Wellington ? "Our chief state oracle !" *Ah, vraiment !* "The people of England are quiet enough if you let them alone, and if not there is a way to make them." The Duke was notoriously the one man who went nearer to plunging England into civil war than any "State oracle" of his time. His one idea was discipline. His whole scheme as a State oracle was political pipeclay. As for the rest of it—"Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power"—"truth-teller was our English Duke"—things like these look, from the level at which poetry is written, the "very false gallop" of British bunkum.

Does the reader wonder what all this has to do with Mr. Vernon Harcourt ? We shall, I hope, see directly. Since the death of the Duke of Wellington, we have had, in London, a political outbreak of the kind which might well rouse him from his grave, if he were not such a martinet that he would be sure to go on being dead if that was the proper thing to do. Why should he seek, like Tithonus, "to vary from the kindly use of men" ? He would know better, and not even the falling of the Hyde Park railings would now make him "fall out of the ranks" of the Majority. But the political outbreak in question proved to be another occasion for the manufacture of bunkum by the party of Order, and has actually been worked and worked, its suggestions flogged up, and its significance inflamed, till something has been accomplished in this country to

poison the very life-blood of liberalism. To quote an image of Mr. Vernon Harcourt's at St. James's Hall, after the passing of Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill, they have boiled the tulip. The throwing down of those railings was the merest trifle. The natural sequel was to fine any of the roughs who could be caught, and build up the railings again as quickly as possible. Yet what did we have at about that time? We had a Home Secretary in tears, military in reserve, ready, according to the recipe of the Duke who never paltered with Eternal God for power, to make the English people quiet. And, in the current journalism, what did we not have? We had the most trivial events put in such lights that Mr. Disraeli, only the other night, could stand up and charge Mr. Gladstone with having harangued a mob from his windows in Carlton Gardens—the fact being that, for the sake of public quiet, Mrs. Gladstone and her daughter (I think) just came out upon the terrace of the house to appease a bellowing crowd, who were of about as much importance as the crowd round a Punch and Judy show. *Punch* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Saturday Review*, and other powerful organs came out often in the spirit of the lines I have quoted from "Reverberations," and the Duke's Ode; and then, in a worse, though a much more sincere spirit, Mr. Matthew Arnold repeated his father's dictum for such occasions (I quote from memory), "Throw the ring-leaders over the Tarpeian rock, and flog the rank and file." And all this about a miserable mob who made the West-end thoroughfares unpleasant for a time; who had no true political purpose; and who, if they had been capable of coherently conceiving such a thing, could not easily have made it a really revolutionary one, for want of middle-class leaders, who would lend themselves to such an issue. The most sensible thing was, as might be expected, said by Mr. Mill, who made the memorable but perfectly obvious remark that "the countries where the people were allowed to show their strength were just the countries where they were never required to use it."

The point in which all the humbug (the word must be repeated) of the situation centred was the deliberate masking, on both sides, of the obvious truth that Government means force and nothing *but* force. The reasons and motives of Government in the abstract are quite another matter. But a sickening sense of the natural genius of Mr. Carlyle's "most people" for lying (to themselves, I mean, not for a moment would one dare to go further) came over some of us when we were preached to about the wickedness of "intimidating the Government." Now, it is perfectly plain that this is idle. Force, latent or evolved, is Government. The people is supposed to send certain men up to St. Stephen's to do its will—those men being understood to have pledged themselves to a general acquiescence in the will of the people. These commissionnaires are at liberty to step out of commission at any moment; and they

are at liberty to come to any compromises with their employers that they please, but either the theory of self-government is absurd, or the "intimidation" of commissioned persons who will neither do "the will of the people" nor "come out of that," is perfectly legitimate and natural. However, as the vintner says in Chaucer, when he is discussing the aggressive ways of his big wife, and explaining what a terrible little fellow he is when he is roused, you know—"Let us passe away fro this matiere." It is really not worth discussing, when matters have never come even to the pass familiar to street boys and cads, of—You hit me first! I should like to see you do it! *Would* you?

Now such a thing was not even in the air. But from what was in the air rose, among other striking figures, that of Mr. Vernon Harcourt, and it was in the train of Mr. Gladstone that he first became politically prominent. Mr. Gladstone is himself a most puzzling figure. In 1852 (at about the time of the famous "W.B." difficulty) some members of the Carlton are said to have threatened to pitch him out of the window in the direction of the Reform Club, for that was his proper place. Yet nobody, studying the more obvious characteristics of his mind, would have predicted as a possible creed of his any sort of Liberalism in which the tulip was not boiled. It looked much the same with Mr. Vernon Harcourt. The public first heard much of him in a military cause célèbre, and afterwards he was a prominent figure at the Parliamentary Bar. Nobody who gauged the man by his more obvious characteristics would have judged for a moment that he could ever be a true Liberal. At the time the marriage of the Marquis of Lorne was on the carpet Mr. Harcourt committed himself in a manner which the world will not willingly let die; a "stupefied" correspondent of the *Daily News* wrote to inquire how near Mr. Harcourt stood to the throne, and whether, in the event of his succeeding to it, he would be able to retain his seat for Oxford. Recently, in the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone observed that the honourable member was in the habit of laying down the law in a way which no one of his standing had ever used before in the House of Commons. Yet, if we are to measure what we may expect of Mr. Vernon Harcourt by his own measure of what we are *not* to expect of anybody else, we cannot well expect too widely or too far in advance. For it is he who has emphatically declared that "statesmanship is a lost art" (lost, that is, to the human race at large); and if we are to judge of the intensity of his Liberalism by the number, point, and excellence of his criticisms from the Liberal side, Mr. Vernon Harcourt will be the Alaric-Abdiel of the Liberal party—a scourge of God to Liberals who boil their tulips, and among the faithless ever faithful found. "Call for Enobarbus!"—that cry will never be raised concerning Mr. Harcourt! Personally, I do not like his notions of economy in the matter of our

army and other national defences—about which I have the very strongest and deepest opinions; but there may be compensations, and if the worst comes to the worst, though the command of the Channel fleet might not be exactly thrown open, the British nation would with one voice exclaim, “The tools to him that can use them;” and would remember, in the hour of peril, him who made game of “the man-of-war from Droitwich.” But, possibly, Mr. Harcourt would not take office of any kind; not even that of Commander of the Fleet.

Be that as it may, there is much, very much, to be said, for testing Mr. Vernon Harcourt by keeping him in his present position, and it may not be a bad thing, if the Liberal party can long keep him as a Dog Tear'em. He is a man of high general culture, which is a great point, especially in the present House of Commons, and nobody could read the Letters of Historicus, or certain articles in the *Saturday Review*, which it is not difficult to fix as his, without seeing that he has both intellectual consistency and intellectual tenacity. Both these are, now-a-days, very rare things. While those who regard politics mainly as a sort of fine art to be practised by the superior classes upon the inferior, for the protection of the former and the drilling of the latter, have been warning us against the bugbear of mob law in the coarser sense, we have been gravitating towards government by intellectual mob-law, under whose rule political logic is hustled out of sight with its hat over its eyes. Everybody's head seems full of blind alleys, and intellectual tenacity is hurrying to the limbo of lost virtues. Will Mr. Vernon Harcourt remain true to the tradition he has begun to form for himself? At present his opinions appear to be most sharply defined. He is not that mischievous hybrid, a Benthamised-Conservative (though he may, for what we know, be technically a Utilitarian), nor is he a working man's Liberal of the type of Mr. Thomas Hughes; (in Parliament, or Mr. J. M. Ludlow out of it). He has quoted with approbation a dictum of some lawyer (probably a barrister, who draws Acts of Parliament), that Parliament is creating misdemeanours at the rate of five hundred a year; and he, no doubt, discerns the process by which we have come to have such a Parliament; and where it is that the tulip gets boiled;—at least, one hopes so. His criticism and vote on the Ballot Bill—I speak only for myself—proved that he had a strong and direct hold on the first principles of political freedom. If Mr. Harcourt chooses to be something more than the holder of a watching brief in the interests of freedom, he will not need to look far for clients who will give him a chance.

At all events, the vigorous stand made by Mr. Harcourt upon the Royal Parks and Gardens Bill, proves that he has not forgotten the “concatenation accordingly” which was his opportunity. The purpose for which he remembers it is the question which interests sincere Liberals. If “lowliness is young Ambition's ladder,” it has never been Mr. Harcourt's; but that offers no guidance one way or the other. A man

might be a true and consistent Liberal, in spite of an egotism as harmless as Cobbett's, or as cruel as Thurlow's. The world is less concerned with a man's ladder than with the use to which he puts it; and—to vary the image rather suddenly—Mr. Vernon Harcourt has not yet fully shown his hand. That he is capable of a good deal of reticence, and has had the special training of an advocate and a journalist, are both points which well deserve the attention of those who happen to be interested in watching his movements.

HENRY HOLBEACH.

THE WAXWORK;

OR, LOVE AND RUMOUR.

I.

In a corner dark of Vanity Fair
A dingy booth you'll see,
Old Mother Rumour sitteth there,
And leereth vacantly;
No thing on earth hath so true an air,
And so false a tongue, as she.

Lean she is, and wither'd, and old,
And her dress is very queer,
Cut in the fashion of folk long cold,
Buried this many a year;
Sew'd with scarlet and patch'd with gold,
Yet yellow and grim and sere.

But the drollest part of the old girl's dress
Is a head-cap strange to sight,
Fashion'd so curiously you'd guess
'Twas a death's-head grinning white:
It waggles about while the people press
From morning until night.

At the waxwork door she sits so grey,
With a greedy leer and grim;
If you go in from the light of day
And find all dark and dim,
And two candles guttering away
For her palsied hands to trim.

When the show is full with a dozen or so,
The old Hag quits her seat,
And shuffles down the ghastly row
With trembling hands and feet:
In the draughty air the rushlights blow,
As she doth her tale repeat.

Around her purblind glance is cast
 On the figures pale and tall,
 Her memory is failing fast
 And she confuses all :
 King and Headsman, Present and Past,
 The mighty with the small !

For her stock of figures is ever the same,
 And neither more nor less ;
 But she must change the dress and the name,
 And it causes her distress ;
 [Tho' her blunders cause her little shame
 And little bashfulness.]

He who was lately old John Knox
 To-morrow may be Pope Joan !
 Times are busy, and grim Guy Fawkes
 To Robespierre has grown !
 Sink the Baptist a little in his socks,
 And Luther stands full blown !

See here the last great murderer
 Stands praying in the cart ;
 But the self-same figure I aver
 Was lately Buonaparte—
 Just as the public thoughts prefer,
 She dresses each with art.

Queen or harlot, or both in one,
 Beggars and priests and kings ;
 Every figure beneath the sun
 Wherewith Fame's trumpet rings.
 How well on the whole the trick is done
 With the same old stock of things !

II.

Listen, my love ! But yesternight
 When the fun of the Fair all slept,
 I saw the booth in the dark all white,
 And under the canvas crept :
 And there I looked on the strangest sight,
 Hid from the most adept !

'Twas black, pitch black, in the booth within,
When I to peep began,
But suddenly the moon look'd in,
Thro' a rent in the tent, all wan ;
And the waxen figures both plump and thin,
Stood looming, woman and man !

The waxen figures stood white like death,
In their varied dress all dumb ;
I look'd upon them, and felt my breath
Like a chill wind go and come ;—
And in the midst, like a hideous wraith,
The Hag !—on the gilded drum !

On the gilded drum she sat and smiled,
And her head was a skull so gray,
Which wagg'd about like the head-dress wild
She weareth all the day ;
And at her side where she mused and smiled,
A glittering scythe there lay.

A skeleton form with eyes so red,
She sat without a sound,
And she kick'd her heels, and roll'd her head,
In a reverie profound ;
And the waxen shapes like the very dead,
In their quaint attire, stood round !

The moon, thro' a rent in the canvas sheet,
Lit her from head to heel,
Her rags had fallen to her feet,
And she glitter'd bright as steel :
Schoolboys in dreams such spectres meet,
After a gluttonous meal.

With my heart in my mouth, afraid and chill,
I ceased to gape and stare,
And I breathed again 'neath the stars so still,
And the heavens so blue and fair ;
And I rush'd to the top of a windy hill,
To get a breath of air.

III.

Then in I came from the chill of night,
And into your little room,
And the vaporous breath of the moon was bright
Around you in the gloom ;
And you waken'd up in your bedgown white
To see my pale face loom.

And the hideous nightmare seem'd by far
More sad than all things seem,
As your face, like a little drowsy star,
Broke to a welcome gleam—
“My dear,” you murmur'd, “how late you are,
I have had such a lovely dream !”

THE QUALITY OF THE BRAIN.

WE all form rough judgments of each other, as bright or dull, cheerful or melancholy, sluggish or energetic, stupid or intelligent. But none of our judgments are more emphatically of the class called empirical, and none have more frequently to be revised or repented of.

In youth, while the human face is yet comparatively fresh to us, we decide positively and hastily, and, for the most part, wrongly. That gift of the "discerning of spirits," which is usually attributed to the young, is the especial property of childhood,—perhaps one should say, of very early childhood. The intuitions of a boy of ten years are not to be trusted in such matters, whatever may be said for those of a baby of ten months or of four-and-twenty. As soon as ever the serpent has entered Paradise,—in other words, as soon as the little mind has begun to criticise in anything like the forms common to the adult mind,—there is no end to the risk of error. The symbols that represent particular moral qualities are, in the case of the growing boy and girl, so very simple ! A pair of curled moustaches means fierceness ; depressed eyebrows mean ill-temper ; full red cheeks stand for good-humour ; and what, in after-life, we should all agree to call a smirk, means benevolence or tenderness.

Far later in life, we go on making blunders similar in kind. Features acutely chiselled, with quick, glossy eyes, commend themselves to us, as indicating intelligence ; and there are very few inexperienced persons to whom a tolerably moist blue eye will not commend the possessor as a good-natured, cheerful, or (if the conception of tenderness have been really formed in the mind of the observer) even tender person.

Some of the surprises that await us in these or similar particulars are often pathetic or even tragic. At five-and-thirty we see that the errors of thirteen were inevitable, but how we regret them ! There was a certain face made sad through suffering of a nature you were too young to understand. You stood aloof from the man, though he wished you well, and clung to the knees of a smooth-faced scoundrel, and so on, and on, without end ; for old people make these blunders as well as young ones. And there is a certain tract of moral country in which we have all gone astray. Is there, was there ever, will there be ever, a man who, to the last day of his life, will not be liable to be fooled by the exquisite, inscrutable promise of the female face ? The

word "fooled" slips from the pen, but it is not because he who holds the pen believes that any *unselfish* faith is ever really fooled:—

Perchance, when you looked so divinely,
You meant, and meant only, to say—
"How sad that he dwells in a garret,
And lives on so little a day!"*

Nor, indeed, is this what I meant by fooling. The deceived lover in "Le Palais de la Vérité," when he discovers that Rosamira has forged the crystal box, exclaims, almost fainting with despair, after his repeated blunders in judging of women, "Tout l'art de la féerie ne saurait, donc, mettre à l'abri de la perfidie des femmes;—dans ce palais même une femme trouve encore le secret de tromper!" And a much more humane and subtle writer has said of woman that—

Her mode of candour is deceit.

But the burthen of the matter lies not here. To a man, a tolerably fair female face suggests so much that is unutterably sweet and attractive, but that does not seem justified by his experience of life, when he comes close to the possessor of the face! It is not long since a young married man told me all his illusions were gone. Let not the reader suppose, in haste, that I am driving at a commonplace; the point we are aiming at, is *not* an obvious one. This young man was well educated, good natured, incapable of (more than passing and casual) unkindness, and was better pleased with his wife and his first child or two—for it is early days with him yet—than most married men. But, though he made this communication to me with a laugh, its real meaning did not escape me, and, in fact, it was easy to see that he made it to me because he knew I should catch that very meaning. Only, it is, of course, out of any man's power to open for another man those inner depths of human experience, which justify to some people, if they live long enough and seriously enough, and if the right thing happens to them, that promise of the female face of which I fear it must be said that the immense majority of men find it simply disappointing. And there are certain particulars in which it is really a cheat, taking women in detail. What sweetness, what tenderness, what modesty, what delicacy in the handling of unpleasant facts, what sense of mystery, you can hardly fail to see in the face of many an ordinary pretty woman. Yet, if you take the rule, is the average young woman kinder, more thoughtful, nay, is she even cleaner, than the average young man? There is a great deal to be said for the negative—a very great deal indeed. Compare the young women whom you see in streets and public conveyances, in the

* "Artist and Model" (London Poems), by Robert Buchanan.

morning and evening going to or returning from employment, with the young men. I declare, the fact has forced itself on my senses, that the young men are the cleaner and better-kept animals. As for tenderness and thought-taking, though every form of male waiting and hand service is to me utterly hateful, I would rather, *if I must* be nursed, have Corporal Trim at my side than the *ordinary* woman. The reader may safely assume, large as he may think the assumption, that I have present to my mind all that is to be said in the way of extenuation or explanation here; * but the fact remains, that by the majority of men, in the majority of cases, the female countenance is found a beautiful mask. I merely use the fact here as one of the strongest illustrations of my own particular point.

Some of the facts which are frequently quoted as illustrations of that point are not really fit for the purpose. We are often told, for example, that you may go into a mixed assembly and utterly fail to distinguish by any external sign the "clever" men and women. This is not my own experience, even taken in that rough way; but it is, at once, open to this comment: What do you mean by "clever men"? It is an old remark that the effective men of society, the "clever" persons who get into the prominent situations, are not, as a rule, men or women who have faculties of the high order which seem to demand a lofty or irresistibly striking external expression. The great doctor A., or the learned professor B., the very successful novelist C., the learned judge or barrister D., or the energetic member of parliament E., of all these, and such as these, it may be said, perhaps, and sometimes plausibly, that they do not look particularly different from the cheesemonger F. or the licensed victualler G. Even this is not true; for intellectual pursuits must and do affect the face and fibre, and if you get together an assembly of men who are devoted to such pursuits, and an assembly of mere Gibeonites, you will soon see, in the mass, the difference which escapes you in the few selected instances. Where, then, is the stress of the difficulty?

In the first place, it is probable that the intellectual persons and the hewers of wood and drawers of water (now we must change the metaphor of race!) are alike Philistines; because most people are, and the most inveterate of that herd are among the intellectual and educated classes who "succeed." So far the specimens will all look alike, to a casual observer. The fresh-eyed observer would have been a phrase as much to the purpose: the freshness of our impressions in youth is not wholly made up for by that superior skill

* For example, that many of the girls who have to earn their own living have been, by compulsion, more familiar with sordid things than youths of their own social standing; have less time, fewer means of personal cleanliness, and fewer opportunities of seeing the manners of their betters.

in deduction, which we may acquire in maturity. A young friend of mine, having been in a room with a number of men of science, but without knowing the persons in that capacity, said to me, "What a peculiar lot they are!—heavy, spatula-fingered men." This young observer had no genius for classification, and did not know the whole force of what he was saying (which in that particular case was strikingly true); but the reader may take it for granted that, apart from this precious sensitiveness of early youth, a tolerably trained eye can pick out, for every separate class of men, indications of mental quality fully as suggestive. Yet what a mistake it would be to run away with the absolute generalisation that *all* men of science are heavy and spatula-fingered! The illustration must not be pushed beyond its natural point of termination.

In the second place, what are the external signs you begin by looking for? Most likely it is the flashing eye, the broad brow, the illuminated air, and all the rest of that sort of upholstery. Now these you may not find among successful men of talent—even of very great talent; nor by any means necessarily among men of genius. With regard to these latter, the proper course, one proper course, is to study the essential peculiarity of the upholstery sign when you happen to come across it. It will be admitted, for example, that the eyes of Goethe and the eyes of Keats were very striking. But you might find eyes as large and as fine in colour among very common people indeed. The point, then, is to find out what were the essential peculiarities in the eyes of those two men of genius—the things which so set off the form, size, and colour of their eyes as to give them the essential expression of genius. And then, when you come upon eyes inferior in form, size, and colour, you may yet chance to find signs of genius in them. I mention the eyes in passing, but, in point of fact, I know of no merely facial signs of a high temperament which are so constant as those to be found in the hair, the lips, and the nostrils.

The best known and, for ends of ordinary observation, the most simply useful of the means devised for getting at the quality of the brain is the doctrine of the temperaments. The reader is no doubt in full possession of the difficulty. You may take two men, says the cranioscopist, whose heads shall show very similar developments, and yet one shall be "clever" and energetic, and the other shall not. Or you may find, contrary to all the general rules in that case made and provided, that a man with a small brain shows more mental energy than another man with a large brain. If craniology is true, says our friend, it is necessarily the case that the *tendencies* of men whose heads are similar should be similar; but this may be the case, and yet one of them may distinguish himself by force of intellect and feeling, and the other not. This depends, he goes on to say, upon the quality or composition of the brain, which is the most indeterminate thing in the world, and one of the most inscrutable. But, he

continues, we can form pretty near guesses at it, even in the rough way supplied by the doctrine of the temperaments.

Though a great many persons must be familiar with the "temperaments," as ordinarily described in recent books of phrenology and physiognomy, we cannot, for our purpose, dispense with Dr. Spurzheim's description. Those who know it will perhaps bear with it once more :—

"The Lymphatic, or phlegmatic, temperament is indicated by a pale-white skin, fair hair, roundness of form, and repletion of the cellular tissue; the flesh is soft; the vital actions are languid, the pulse is feeble, and the whole frame indicates slowness and weakness in the vegetative, affective, and intellectual functions.

"The Sanguine temperament is proclaimed by a tolerable consistency of flesh, moderate plumpness of parts, light or chestnut hair, blue eyes, great activity of the arterial system, a strong, full, and frequent pulse, and an animated countenance. Persons thus constituted are easily affected by external impressions, and possess greater energy than those of the former temperament.

"The Bilious* temperament is characterised by black or dark hair, yellowish or brown skin, black eyes, moderately full but firm muscles, and harshly expressed forms. Those endowed with this constitution have a strongly marked and decided expression of countenance; they manifest great general activity, and functional energy.

"The external signs of the Nervous temperament are fine thin hair, often inclining to curl, delicate health, general emaciation, and smallness of the muscles; rapidity in the muscular actions; vivacity in the sensations. The nervous system of individuals so constituted preponderates extremely, and they exhibit great nervous sensibility."

Now, all this is open to comment, both as to its essence and its applications. But that I find I must defer, and will only add now that the hair is, on the whole, the sign upon which I have found most dependence is to be placed, and that it must be borne in mind, in making observations, that the hair of women is, as a rule, thicker than that of men.

H.

* "Fibrous" is much better.

OFF THE SKELLIGS.

By JEAN INGELow.

CHAPTER XIV.

"And 'tis sentiment kills me, says I."

SOUTHAMPTON. My first view of it showed a gloomy background of cloud with lines of angry red running between its thunderous folds, and a dark foreground of old wall—Roman wall, I was informed. It looked as old as the hills, and almost as substantial. A very shallow reach of water that hardly covered the green weed lay between us and the pier, and derived an unquiet beauty from the broken reflections of a long row of lamps just being lighted on shore.

Tom and Mr. Brandon were about to push off when I came on deck. They were going to London that night, partly about passports, partly, I felt sure, that Mr. Brandon might have a surgical opinion about his arm, and partly to call on an aunt of the children's, an English lady, who lived in town, and might wish to see them before they were taken to their grandmother.

The dear little creatures had travelled a good deal considering their tender age. They had been born in England, their father being a poor clergyman in the north of Yorkshire. Not quite a year before their return as orphans, he had accepted a chaplaincy in the West Indies, but his health failing, after a very few months, he had gone up to Charleston with his family to stay with a French lady, a relation of his wife's, and there had died.

Mr. Brandon knew nothing about the circumstances of their family; he was not even sure how their name was spelt, but he had an address in London, and had accepted the charge of them from their mother.

It was Saturday night. Uncle Rollin and I spent a very quiet Sunday, going on shore to church, and afterwards walking beside the grand old wall.

On Monday I did a vast amount of shopping, bought a quantity of material for work at sea when the children should be gone, and spent a great deal of time, with Mrs. Brand's help, in choosing things for my own wear, for I perceived that it was supposed to be my first duty to be always neatly and gracefully dressed. I tried to be as economical as I could, as my allowance was not large; but the very next day after these purchases were made, my uncle, taking a walk with me, stopped before one of the principal mercer's shops, and, after looking

into the window attentively, beckoned out a young man, and pointing at various things with his finger, said,—

"You'll be so good as to put up *that* for me, and *that*, and *that*——"

"Won't you come inside, sir?" said the young man, who was evidently surprised at his style of shopping.

"No," he answered, retreating a step or two. "I don't think I will, thank you."

I gave Mrs. Brand, who was behind us with her husband, a significant look, and she stepped forward.

"And I'll have that, too," said my uncle, pointing at a very broad blue sash-ribbon that dangled in front of the other things.

"Yes, but you only mean a sash of it, sir, and a dress-length of the silk, and of the embroidered muslin, and that scarf," said Mrs. Brand.

"Of course," he answered.

"Uncle, they are too expensive," I ventured to say.

"And what do you call that?" he continued to the master, who had now come out.

"That's an opera-cloak, sir; a very sweet thing."

"Well, and I'll have that, if you please. Good morning, sir. This good friend of mine," indicating Mrs. Brand, "will tell you where to send the things."

He then marched off with me.

"I know I shall repent this," he observed in a moment or two.

"Dear uncle, pray, pray let us go back then, and countermand the order."

"Nonsense, child! I meant that as we're going to France, I might have done better to buy these things there."

"I know very well they are for me."

"Yes. Why didn't you say 'Thank you!'"

"Because I am so afraid if you let me be such an expense to you, it will make you dislike me. You must have spent twenty pounds."

"But I only spent what I chose. You should take example by me, and *never go inside*, and then you can get away whenever you like."

Uncle Rollin and I were very happy together till three o'clock on Wednesday, when, coming on board, we found Tom and Mr. Brandon waiting for us on deck, and a lady who was introduced to me as Miss Tott.

She remarked that she had come to see her nieces. I saw two huge boxes with her name upon them, and wondered at the amount of luggage she had brought, as we were to sail the next day.

I took her to my cabin, where the children, arrayed in their pink frocks, were playing about.

Miss Tott embraced them both, and wept over them copiously. She was a pleasant-looking person, tall, very slender, head a little on one side, drooping eyes, a long nose that projected rather too far into space, a pensive, soothing voice, and a fine complexion.

Little Frances stared at her, and escaped from her kisses as quickly as possible; Nannette regarded her with curiosity and disfavour.

"My precious ones," murmured Miss Tott. "I trust their spirits are not utterly weighed down by these accumulated misfortunes. It is indeed sad when the heart is wrung in infancy."

"What is she crying for?" whispered Frances to me.

Suddenly she clasped her hands, and looked up, exclaiming,—

"They are in coloured dresses—ah me! and what a colour—pink!"

"Yes, ma'am," put in Mrs. Brand, who seemed struck with admiration of this sensibility; "we had nothing black for them to wear when they came on board; their own frocks were torn to shreds, I do assure you."

"I hope this has not been an additional pang to their tender hearts," continued Miss Tott. "You have explained to them, doubtless, that there has been no intentional disrespect."

She spoke to me, and not without secret wonder I replied,—

"They have not noticed it. They are too young to feel deeply; but I have heard them speak with affection of their dear mamma and the baby."

Miss Tott dried her eyes and held out her hand to Nannette, who drew back.

"This is little Nannette's aunt," I whispered. "Go to her."

The troublesome little creature instantly said aloud,—

"But hasn't she brought us something pretty from London?"

That was because Mr. Brandon had promised each of them a toy.

I pushed the chubby little thing nearer, and she shook back her shining lengths of straight hair, and condescended to take the hand presented to her.

"And so my little darling has no dear papa and mamma, and no sweet baby sister, now?"

"It isn't a baby sister," lisped the child, softly; "it's my little baby brother; he's got two teeth."

"But he is gone now. Nannette has no baby brother now."

"Yes, I have."

"Is it possible that they are in ignorance of these things?" cried Miss Tott, "or are they devoid of feeling?"

"Neither; but they do not understand you."

"He did cry," said Nannette, with great simplicity, "when he was on the raft."

"But he is very happy now," put in the other child. "Mr Brandon says he never cries at all; God took him up to heaven."

"He likes to be up there," said Nannette.

Miss Tott looked scandalised at this infantile talk, but her boxes now appearing, to my ill-concealed surprise she said to me,—

"Mr. Brandon proposed to take my dear little nieces to their grandmamma, but I could not bear the thought that my little desolate ones should go alone; so I said I hoped it would be no inconvenience to Captain Rollin if I accompanied them."

I thought he would very much dislike to have a lady passenger, and I said nothing by way of encouragement.

"I see abundance of room," she presently added, looking round.

"But not at my disposal," I answered.

"O, do not let that disturb you," she said very sweetly, and with a soothing tone that I rather resented; "your brother will speak to Captain Rollin when he comes on board—no responsibility shall rest on you, the gentlemen will do all, and after the captain's noble hospitality, I have no anxious feelings about the result; so," she continued very softly, "would it be too much to ask that I might be alone with the dear children for a short time?"

I was rather glad to comply with her request, and went away with the admiring Mrs. Brand, shutting Miss Tott in with the children.

In the chief cabin I found Mr. Brandon and Tom, the former marching about in a very impatient style; he was evidently vexed and fretted.

They had been mildly and sweetly obliged by Miss Tott to bring her and her luggage on board, and each being soothed and assured that he should not have any unpleasant responsibility, had been told what a relief it would be to "the captain" to find that the children's best and nearest protector was ready to go with them.

"And what did my uncle say?" I asked.

"He pulled a long face, but he evidently means to submit."

I said it was a very odd thing.

"The whole journey has been odd," observed Tom.

"Yes," said Mr. Brandon, "I saw when we called on her that she was full of pensive obstinacy and tender humbug."

"Why did you bring her with you then?"

"She made us; she would come. She felt that 'the captain' would expect no less of her, and she could not disappoint him."

"You should have assured her to the contrary."

"We did, over and over again—no use; she did not intend to hear. Graham, I wish we had been lost in that fog, and never found her house."

"A fog! we have had none here."

"We had a very thick fog," said Tom, "directly after the thunder-storm—a soupy fog; we took a cab and set off in it to find the grand-

father and this aunt. Drove a long way and saw nothing; at last, after a sharp turn, and one or two most preposterous jolts, we heard a loud knock and came to a stand. The driver had given matters up, and the horse, in despair of finding the right turn, had gone up the steps of a house and was knocking at the door with his nose."

"The footman opened it," said Mr. Brandon, "and uttered a manly screech. We asked where we were, and found we were in Eaton Square. The horse, all this while, foolishly stared in at the hall-door. We managed to get on into Chester Square; and if Graham would only have stood by me, you would have seen a different result."

"Nothing of the sort," said Tom; "you were quite as helpless as I was, if not more so. She made us come and fetch her too, and her great chests, and what with all your tailor's parcels and mine, and that great Noah's ark nearly as big as a child's coffin (and some great woolly dogs that he bought too, Dorothea, which barked in the parcel whenever we moved them), I never went through so much with luggage in my life!"

"Yes, I have been round the world with less," said Mr. Brandon.

"So, here she is," proceeded Tom; "she wants to persuade the old grandmother that she ought to take the entire responsibility of the children: her father she says cannot afford it. Now their grandmother, who was brought up a French Protestant, has lately become a Roman Catholic; and Brandon naturally hoped the children would be taken by the father's family and brought up in the religion of their parents. But no, they cannot afford it, they say."

A great deal of crying and scuffling at my cabin-door was now heard: we looked at one another.

"Let them alone," said Tom; "she has, no doubt, made the children cry by some dismal talk. Now let her manage them herself; she has a right to be alone with her own nieces if she likes."

"You seem to forget, poor thing, that she has only heard within the last day or two of the death of her sister-in-law; really, I think she may be excused for being sorrowful."

"She took that matter very composedly," said Tom; "she even informed us that dear Fanchon had been a very bad manager, and a very bad match for her brother. In fact, we thought she seemed to consider it a mark of the favour of Providence towards herself that her sister-in-law had been taken."

The remainder of that day was not at all comfortable. Miss Tott's tender regrets over the children always seemed to imply reproof of somebody else, and as they took a great dislike to her I found it difficult to make them behave tolerably. When at last they were put to bed, each insisted on taking her woolly dog with her, and as long as they could possibly keep awake, they made them bark at intervals. They had been well taken care of during the voyage, but

not kept in order, and consequently they were troublesome. Mrs. Brand and I had not established much control, and while one was being dressed, she would set off and run round the cabin. Then the other would rebel in some infantine fashion, poking her fingers into the pomatum, or spilling my eau de Cologne. These things it would have been ridiculous to treat as serious offences, but by dint of grave looks, a little scolding, and a little coaxing, we got on pretty well, and they would soon have been very good children, but they chanced to be particularly full of spirits the first morning of their aunt's presence, and when she found that nothing she could say had any effect, she sat down in a corner and drooped, leaving Mrs. Brand and me to catch and dress the little rebels. When these operations were over, I lectured them both very gravely, and received kisses in token of penitence, but Miss Tott could not recover her spirits, and from that hour she never did anything for them, and seemed instinctively to shrink from interfering in the least.

She evidently knew nothing of children excepting from books. She expected to find some ready-tamed little mortals, calm, and rather depressed, instead of two chubby things, quite wild, unconscious of orphanhood, and mischievous, penitent, naughty, and good again every hour of the day.

To me they were the greatest amusement possible, and to Mrs. Brand a delight that it did one good to see; but they certainly did not do themselves justice that morning.

Nannette talked at prayers, and had to be carried out crying. Frances got away from Mrs. Brand while we were at breakfast, and ran triumphantly into the chief cabin, where her rash act was rewarded by Uncle Rollin, who gave her sausage and toast, and afterwards carried her on deck, to the great scandal of her aunt.

I had bought some black alpaca at Southampton, and after breakfast Mrs. Brand and I set to work to cut out frocks for the children, that we might take them to their grandmother in mourning clothes; and Mrs. Brand, cheerful and happy, in the prospect of having almost more to do that day than she could possibly accomplish, was such a pleasant companion, that I might have stayed below another hour, if Tom had not come to remind me that I had left Miss Tott to amuse herself as best she could, which did not seem altogether polite.

My uncle was in the chief cabin reading the morning papers, which had come in just before we sailed. I came on deck with my work, and found Miss Tott with Mr. Brandon and Tom sitting on deck-chairs under the awning. We were about ten miles south of Southampton; the sea was blue, the deep sky empty and bare, the sun hot, the air delightful.

A shame to shut out such a firmament, is it not?" asked Mr. Brandon.

I replied without considering, "I should think so, if it was not absolutely empty and open."

"Indeed, and why?"

"Oh! because there is something so pathetic in those awful deeps of empty blue—something to fear in that waiting infinitude, with no islands up aloft, nothing that belongs to us; only God's great desert."

"You prefer to have some of it shut out; you want a tent over your head even when you are out of doors?"

"Yes, I like to feel enclosed, and in my home; clouds are very sublime no doubt, but not oppressively so."

Miss Tott on hearing this, laid her hand on my arm, with an air not quite of reproof, but rather of tender pity.

"And yet," she said, "we ought not to shrink from nature in her deeper sublimities; nature in the dark midnight sky, and the green, surging billows—nothing else can so well soothe the racked and burdened mind, and still the turbid passions of the soul."

I had often heard people say this kind of thing, and read it in books, but my narrow experience had not yet brought it before me, and Miss Tott uttered her speech in a way that I rebelled against a little. She seemed so much to feel the sweetness and wisdom of her own words, and to fancy that she was tenderly instilling so much truth into a hardened nature, that, instead of making any reply, I felt an unworthy wish to shake off her hand; however, I resisted this, and there it still lay, as if to appeal to my better self; my ordinary self being covered with blushes, because Tom and Mr. Brandon were looking at me. At last, I said,—

"No doubt the beauty and grandeur of the world is very invigorating, very elevating."

"You speak as of some abstract truth that you have nothing to do with."

"Miss Graham speaks of what will not always bear discussion," said Mr. Brandon, coming to the rescue; "her first words showed rather an over-sensitiveness to the influence of the sublime than the absence of it."

Miss Tott took no notice of him, but continued to gaze at me, and keeping her hand on my arm oppressed me further by saying with pensive compassion,—

"But is there no solace for the heart in communing with nature in her wilder moods, and coming to be healed by her when your spirit is crushed?"

The tender, old words, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" flashed across my mind and a thought of "the physician there;" but I was much too shy to put my thought into words, and answered instead,—

"I don't exactly know; I never am crushed."

"Ah!" she replied, withdrawing her hand, "you will be, some day."

"Don't, Miss Graham," exclaimed Mr. Brandon. "I wouldn't, if I were you!"

I looked up; he and Tom sat opposite, enjoying the dialogue, but neither moved a muscle of his face; and, to my discomfiture, Miss Tott took up her crochet, and murmured some low sentence in which we distinguished the word "profane;" but she seemed to be more in sorrow than in anger, and as she worked, she handled the very needle with a tenderness that might have shown us the depth of her compassion for us.

Tom and Mr. Brandon glanced at one another with eyes that seemed to say, "We have got into a scrape," and presently, to my surprise, Tom said, in a tone of apparent feeling,—

"There is a sort of yearning after the infinite, a kind of a brooding over the irrevocable past, looking as it were over the vessel's side, to see the waves of existence pass slowly by, which——"

"Ah!" exclaimed Miss Tott, interrupting him. "I thought those speaking features could not have deceived me. I thought there must be a heart with such a voice as that."

I knew, of course, that he was amusing himself at her expense, but I am not sure whether Mr. Brandon did.

"I say, old fellow," he exclaimed; "that sort of thing seems more like a dismal aggravation of the crushing process than a remedy."

"It's one that I always use," persisted Tom.

"Ah!" said Miss Tott again.

"Unless I'm *crushed quite flat*," continued Tom; "and then I find that nothing does me so much good as a bottle of soda-water—with—with a little brandy in it! What do you take, Brandon?"

"I am sick of the very word," said Mr. Brandon, with a short laugh. "I shall answer with your sister that I never am crushed, I would rather be excused."

"Oh! but it's nonsense to struggle," said Tom, appealing to Miss Tott with his eyes. "You may kick and struggle as much as you like, but you must submit."

"I won't," he repeated, coolly. "At least, not if I can possibly help it; and not for long together, as long as I can speak a word or wag a finger I won't admit that I'm crushed. It was never intended that I should be. I hate the word. I hate the feeling it describes. Trouble does not come by chance—it is sent to make us rise, not to make us sink."

"All right," said Tom; "but we were not talking of any trouble worth mentioning! I like to hear him fire up," he continued, audaciously looking at us.

Miss Tott opened wide her dark eyes.

"What is that?" she exclaimed, very tartly.

"We were not talking of the troubles of widows and orphans, you know, of pinching poverty and remorse for crime, or the agonies of broken bones and carking care," said Tom, addressing her with suave gravity. "We were talking of poetical yearnings, and general dissatisfaction, of dyspeptic nervousness, and the discomfort of having nothing to do. I am sure I ought to speak feelingly of these ills. No one is a greater martyr to them than I am."

"It is very evident," said Miss Tott, with exceeding sharpness; "that none of you have ever known any trouble worth the name."

"Even if we have," I ventured to say, "surely the good has outweighed the evil."

"What, in this world of sorrow?" she answered. "You do not know what you are talking of."

"I beg your pardon. I did not mean to vex you."

"I am not vexed; but your remark is contrary to reason, religion, and experience."

"To experience, perhaps; but is it contrary to religion?"

"Of course it is. Did not our Saviour say, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation!'"

"Yes; but, perhaps he may have meant that his religion would never exempt them from ordinary ills, nor from that envy of the wicked which makes them sometimes persecute the good."

"I think he meant that they should be afflicted."

"But they knew that before," said Mr. Brandon. "They knew that earth was not paradise."

"Then you wish to prove that our Saviour's words meant nothing."

"On the contrary; they were meant (among other things) to inform the first disciples that in their day would come the worst trouble that the world had ever known. And now it is over—now the Christian nations are richer, wiser, healthier, and stronger than other people."

"What do you mean by other people?"

"All but professed Christians."

Miss Tott was silent for a while, till seeming to remember a point that would yield her some triumph, she turned to Mr. Brandon and exclaimed,—

"Pray, did you feel inclined during the shipwreck to think lightly of trouble, and to be as philosophical as you are to day?"

"I have often been in danger before," he answered, hastily; "so has Graham."

"But what did you think?"

This was rather an unkind cut, and I thought, considering the circumstances, a little ungrateful. He was not willing to discuss the matter, so he tried to put her off by saying,—

"I thought what a number of bones there were in the human frame."

"That was an odd reflection, surely."

"Not at all, if most of them are bruised, and you have nothing to lie on but planks and spars."

"And after that?" she said, still questioning him as if for his good and to elicit some better feeling.

"Too much to be repeated easily. My Yankee friend and I had a great deal to do; but I believe we both felt very strongly the sweetness of life."

"And what next?" she continued, whereupon he gave way to the pressure and replied,—

"I felt the baser part of my nature rising up within me; thoughts so distinct, that they seemed to come from without, buzzed in my ears like wasps. They represented it as hard that the presence of worn-out women and helpless children should make my chance of life so much fainter; hunger, wet, fatigue and pain, things that had stood aloof from me before drew near, and made me feel their weight and power. They gnawed at my heart and chilled my blood."

"But I suppose you did not feel crushed?" said Miss Tott, in the clearest tones of her high-pitched voice.

He seemed to dislike this questioning exceedingly, and yet to be determined to answer.

"No."

"What did you feel?" she asked, mildly.

"I felt that this world was utterly gone by, but that the other world was not so near as it had often been in times of no danger at all. It was not within our grasp; there was something first to be felt and to be seen—but though all was lost and as yet nothing gained I believed it would be gained. After that there came a time of forgetfulness, I did not hear, or feel, or see anything."

"And all this while you were not overwhelmed?"

"I did not expect to live after the first twenty-four hours, because the pitching of the raft put us in such imminent danger, but I did not despair."

"Ah! well, we need not argue about the meaning of words; some of us are better able to bear distress than others; indeed, some of us feel it far less."

This was the very thing that I had anticipated when talking with him some days before, but he did not seem to remember it.

"Then the worst thing you felt when you became exhausted," she said, "was a kind of forgetfulness."

"Oh no, it was not!" he exclaimed; and such a look of horror leapt out of his eyes as for the moment quite astonished us.

He seemed to be collecting his thoughts.

"We had been lashed together," he said, "and I have some sort of recollection of going down and down an almost endless flight of steps, and thinking that I must and would get to the bottom before I died."

After that came a terrible time, when I seemed to be hemmed in by something intensely black, and an awful thought pressed me down, that I was dead—and it was not what I had expected! I felt sure I was dead, and I appeared to go spinning on with that thought for years."

Curiosity got the better of Miss Tott here. She quite forgot to point the obvious moral.

"Was that in the yacht?" she said.

"I think it must have been, because of the steps; besides what enabled me at last to struggle out of that blackness and horror was the touch of something soft on my forehead. I gathered sense by it to perceive that I was still in the body, and I opened my eyes."

He paused, and a smile came over his face.

"I saw a vision," he said; "I knew not what else it could be, and I saw light."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Miss Tott. Here was an experience that just suited her. "What was the vision?"

"I saw a small hand—a child's hand I thought it was at first, and it appeared to hover before my face. There was something bright in it, through which the light was shining. The child—the angel—whatever it might be—was leaning over me, but I only saw the hand. It offered me bread, too; but my senses were so dim that I connected something sacramental with this bread and wine, and would not touch it because my hands and my lips were so begrimed. Then I went back into the blackness again and the hand floated away; but a voice, inexpressibly sweet and pathetic, appeared to be reasoning with me. I heard the sound, but I could not understand the words; and, after what seemed to be a mighty struggle, I got my eyes open, and there was the hand again, and the long folds of a gown floated down at my side."

"Was it very beautiful?" said Miss Tott, in a tone of pleasure and awe; "was it in white?"

"It was my sister, of course," exclaimed Tom; for he saw that she was completely mystified. "It was Dorothea!"

Never shall I forget the look of astonishment and contempt she darted at me when she heard this; she drew up her head and set her lips as if she scorned me, and would not on any account have betrayed such interest if she could only have known what this really meant.

He certainly had not intended to mislead, and answered her last question without looking at her.

"Yes, in white, I think. I did not see the face, and the hand appeared to hover before me till I came more to myself. Then I drank the wine and ate something, and was in this world again."

Miss Tott attracted my attention the more strongly because she was the first person I had met with who, admiring misery, was very anxious to be thought a sufferer. She liked to talk about being stricken, and

also when she and I were alone of the great expense it would be to her to go into deep mourning again.

No doubt if it is a very fine and interesting thing to be stricken, many more people will be stricken than would be the case in the days when people believed that great afflictions were punishments for heinous sins, and "those eighteen" were thought by their neighbours much wickeder folks than themselves.

Miss Tott did not care to pursue the subject of the visionary hand. She returned to her former thought, and said with a sigh,—

"Some people feel things less keenly than others."

"No doubt," he answered; "and some of us think it mean and cowardly to be always looking at the dark side; if we refuse to look at it therefore, no wonder we cannot see it."

"On the contrary, others feel that yearning for sympathy which makes it sweet to commune with some friendly and feeling heart," said Miss Tott, sharply.

"Sympathy is a skittish and perverse nymph; demands too much, and she gives nothing. When a soldier has lost his arm, if he were to go whining about the world lamenting over it everybody would despise him; but if he holds his tongue, and carries his empty sleeve carelessly, all the girls are in love with him."

"We expect a soldier to be brave."

"Certainly, and thus we help to make him so."

"There are many things which are far more hard to bear than loss of limbs," said Miss Tott, severely, and as if she claimed for herself a large share of them.

"We talk without book, having no experience in loss of limbs. I suppose disgrace may be worse—and remorse." I am bound to say that he spoke with a certain hesitation, and added, "I think it only honest to confess that I never had anything to bear that I consider at all comparable to the misery of carrying timber about with me in the shape of a leg or arm. However handsomely it might be made I'm sure the joints would creak," he added, thoughtfully.

"I was not speaking of remorse," said Miss Tott, "I meant such things as loss of friends, disappointment of one's fondest wishes, a hopeless attachment, the death of its object, inconstancy."

Mr. Brandon was silent.

"I consider constancy all stuff," said Tom, "unless it exists on both sides."

"Good heavens!" murmured Miss Tott.

"For," proceeded this hardened young man, "legs and arms won't grow again; but a jilted man has 'all the world before him where to choose.'"

Mr. Brandon laughed, but he looked uneasy, and the subject seemed to please Miss Tott, who said to Tom, with drooping eyelids and pensive sweetness of expression, "We should hardly speak

of this, should we, Mr. Graham, before we know anything about it?"

"Meaning," said Tom, "that I know nothing about it."

"You are young," she replied, with a sort of tender, regretful look at him.

"But not without experience; I have been in love times out of number. I don't mean to say that I have been refused at present; that may be because I have not yet gone the length of making an offer."

"When you do, may you escape that sorrow," she answered, in a tone that was a strange contrast to his banter.

Mr. Brandon evidently winced under this talk: such an unmistakable twinge of dislike passed over his face that I ventured to change the subject by asking some question relative to our rate of sailing.

He looked up to answer with the air of a man who feels himself to be found out, but he took instant advantage of the opportunity to get away, rising and saying that he would go and make some inquiries.

His departure broke up the conference. Miss Tott said she should like to walk about. Tom offered his arm, and I ran below to my cabin to take my finished work down and bring up the children. They were just awake after their morning sleep; but before we had done dressing them to come on deck, Tom knocked loudly at the door, exclaiming, "Here's a pretty state of things: the sea is rising a little, and Miss Tott begins to look very pale. You had better come to her."

I met her coming down. "O let me lie down!" she murmured, "O, this terrible giddiness!"

I gave her to Mrs. Brand,—the usual thing followed; but I observed that she bore it quite as well as other people.

CHAPTER XV.

"To his own master, he standeth or falleth."

How much people talk about their first impressions of a foreign country. It was about six o'clock, and dark with thunder-clouds, and pouring with rain, when I was told we had entered the French harbour, and were lying opposite to the Douane. My luggage, consisting of one little box, was landed, so was Miss Tott's; and we waited on board till it had passed, sitting under umbrellas. Poor Miss Tott was fainting for air and longing to get away from the scene of her misery. Uncle Rollin, at the last moment, took alarm and declined to land, but said he would wait at Havre till we returned from Chartres. It was, therefore, a point of honour to be as quick as we could, and I found that Mr. Brandon and Tom had decided on our

going on to Chartres that same evening ; a cab was waiting to convey us on to the railway station. We had dined ; but poor Miss Tott had eaten nothing since breakfast, so I made Brand give us a goodly basket of provisions to carry with us.

We were a party of six, including the children. Miss Tott and I were surprised to find ourselves in a decided mist, we had hardly expected mist out of England. The rain was uncommonly like English rain. The railway carriage had the same defect,—this was disappointing ; but we had the satisfaction of hearing the railway officials quarrelling in real French. Nothing to be seen : rain, mist, thunder-clouds. We soon unpacked our great basket of provisions. Miss Tott was terribly vexed at having to eat an English pigeon pie and salad on French soil ; and after that, slices of cake, also such a thoroughly English dish ! and then Stilton cheese ; and, lastly, strawberries ; but by ten o'clock we had done all this with appetite, and then taken off the children's hats and laid them on the seat to go to sleep.

As the dusk came on the rain ceased, and Miss Tott and I gazed diligently out of the windows ; but darkness, we were obliged to own, looked much the same everywhere.

We saw hardly anything, even when we reached Paris ; for the children woke up and cried most piteously. We were soon shut up in a room with numbers of people, half of whom spoke as good English as ourselves, and then the officials, storming at Mr. Brandon and the parcels we wanted to have with us, hustled us into a carriage, where, to our disgust, we had to sit for at least ten minutes before the train started.

We slumbered while it was dark, and day had just dawned on a perfectly flat country, when we first saw the graceful spires of Chartres Cathedral.

All very tired, some very cross, we drove to an hotel, and straightway went to bed till nine o'clock, when I woke and peeped out.

Ah, yes, this was foreign indeed !—a fine broad *place*, houses with two or three tiers of windows in the roof, women without bonnets, the clatter of wooden shoes, and a vast amount of joyous jabbering. A big diligence at the door, with three white cart-horses harnessed abreast thereto. (It looked like a haystack on wheels, and was covered with a tarpauling). A market and a fair going on, tables with smoking-hot coffee, and round loaves in the shape of a ring upon them ; bakers' boys bringing these round their arms, and round their necks, great heaps of apples, pears, late cherries, stacks of plums, stains of fruit all over the stones, great rugged melons that did not seem half ripe, tiny French men and French women sitting on them in their little blue pinafores and wooden shoes, and the sun pouring down over all as it never can in England so early in the morning.

Inside, the windows swarmed with flies, and the floor was tiled: cheering sights, so foreign.

Miss Tott and I dressed the children in their new clothes, then we rang, were conducted to a *salon*, where we found Tom and Mr. Brandon, and where we ate a remarkable breakfast, consisting of fried potatoes, rice-pudding, eggs, rolls as long as our arms, boiled pigeons, and wine.

Tom and I were very anxious to get to the cathedral; so, as soon as we had breakfasted, we left Miss Tott and Mr. Brandon to take the children to their grandmother, and set forth, intending to find our way and not to ask it, for it was rather a shock to us to discover that the French spoken by the natives was not quite so intelligible to us as we had confidently expected to find it.

It would not have been easy, however, to lose our way, foreign though we now felt the place to be; the sun on our backs was especially foreign, so was the shop we entered. It was full of the strangest little images, and most of them were black.

We bought the Abbé Bulteau's description of the cathedral, a good-sized book, and learned that the ugly little black dolls represented the celebrated black Virgin. I bought also a Roman Catholic service-book; and we went on a little further, till on a sudden turn the two grand spires stood before us, and the wonderful doors, deep and solemn in the shade, and strangely crowded and guarded by quaint carvings of bishops, saints, apostles, and kings, all bearing that peculiar look which distinguishes so much of the sculpture of the middle ages.

Innocence, purity, devotion, and a kind of saintly calm, was impressed on their impassive faces, and there was something majestic in the deeply-cut folds of the raiment which covered them; but there was in most of them a want of muscle, and force, and manliness; of active thought and towering intellect which at first, as I gazed, disturbed me; but after a long look I felt that the men who carved them so were right, for if they had showed any marks of longing, activity, or command, it would have been painful to think of them as imprisoned there so long.

We entered; shall I ever forget the sudden sense of coolness and shade after the glare of the world outside? We had stepped into some glorious gloom back into time, leaving the noise, and light, and stir of our century behind us; here was an old-world cavern, a grand old roof hung over it, and it was all fluted and fine with hundreds of shafts, and letting in a deep and sombre rainbow through every one of its hundred and thirty coloured windows.

We both stood amazed: they seemed to be little more than semi-translucent. If a peacock's tail and a dove's neck could suddenly have let the light filter through them, and could have added some deep, delightful ruby stains to their own blue, and green, and brown, and

orange glows, they would have been like one of the windows, but there were so many, and they were all different.

Oh ! how beautiful ! how fearful ! how grand !

I sat down to take my fill of gazing. I saw in the clerestory windows the quaint, old giant kings, and priests, and heroes staring down in their jewelled head-gear and Minevere mantles. Then I stole into the aisles, and marked the glorious windows presented by the trades of the town, their artful glories, all different and splendid, and yet the homely, ancient simpleness of their detail.

I understood, then, for the first time, what man can do with colour, and felt the peculiar sensation which is the real root of what attracts and arrests us away from home ; that sense of incongruity, that special way of putting things together, which foreigners feel to be different from anything they ever do.

Suddenly it became to my English eyes all out of keeping, for near the marvellous old stone screen that divides the nave from the quire there was a small, gilded nook, and, in a moment, all the splendour of the grandest art appeared to give way to a childish, shabby piece of finery, like a show at a fair.

The Virgin ; the hideous black Virgin ! there she stood on a projecting bracket ; a vulgar, wooden doll, clad in cloth of woven gold, and frightful in her jewels, with those staring eyes and shapeless arms.

About twenty rushlights were burning before her ; they were stuck on the spikes of a gilt railing, which kept the faithful from touching her, and they winked and guttered down in the daylight, dropping on some flowers which grew in pots below.

I saw four women kneeling and pressing their lips against the railing, their faces were full of adoration, and their eyes gazed at the image. How often had I been told that they did not pray to the image, but to what it represents. I had religiously believed this. I shall never have that comfort again.

The women rose, bowed deeply to the image, and when they were gone I drew near, and Tom came up with the sacristan.

"Yes, Monsieur was right, he now beheld the celebrated black Virgin, the chief ornament of the cathedral. It had been brought down, did Monsieur understand, by two angels."

"No ; Monsieur thought he could not have understood aright."

"The angels brought it direct from heaven. The two angels made it."

"What ! in heaven ?"

"Precisely ; thus you see it is sacred."

Monsieur shook his head, and in bad deliberate French observed, looking round him, "that the work of angels looked very poor beside that of men."

"But, Mopsieur is an Englishman," said the man.

Monsieur wished to see the bones of St. Piat.

"Yes, we should see them when the priest who had the key, returned. But, Mademoiselle would not find them very interesting, for all but the nose was covered with artificial flowers."

This was such a ghastly idea that I declined to see them. Here again was the strange incongruity, and the same man who thought the doll so precious, did not hesitate to spit upon the floor, very near to where she stood.

Then he took us to see several altars, on each of which stood ornaments of plaster, like those on wedding cakes; and, to several niches, in which were large figures, like those in hairdresser's shops—their gowns were trimmed with nun's lace, and their hair had flowers in it.

Mr. Brandon just then came up. He had been looking for us.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he whispered.

"Oh! think: I cannot think there is such solemn, awful splendour and such trash and rubbish. Look at that lovely roof, and then look at those dirty flowers that a kitchen-maid would scorn to wear; look how dirty the floor is."

"Ah! I have seen that sort of thing often. Did you see the Virgin over the great door?"

"I only saw two figures."

"That was our Saviour crowning Mary Queen of Heaven, and declaring her equal with Himself."

The quire gates were then unlocked, and the sacristan began to show us the carving.

"Monsieur will please to notice," he said, still following Tom, "that it is not with us, as in many places, less celebrated places, places to which, as one may say, the more delicate needs of civilisation have not penetrated, and where the priests and quire have to spit on the floor."

He pointed to long things like mignonette boxes filled with sawdust.

"Voilà," said he, with no small pride; "pour les Prêtres, et voilà pour Monseigneur."

We peeped into the bishop's throne, and, true enough, there stood a little one!

I felt very angry with them. I had expected such great reverence and costliness. I thought these belonged to the ideal of the religion.

"They are not dirty because they are Roman Catholics," said Mr. Brandon. "Frenchmen can be dirty whatever their faith, or want of faith. You know," he continued, "the Roman Catholic prelates keep up a beautiful old custom that ours have relinquished: after service, on Sunday, they come out and bless the people. Once, when I was at Coutances, the venerable old archbishop came

out in his golden mitre and all the stiff splendour of his robes, and lifted up his hand, holding it high over the crowd as he stood on the top of the great steps. With the other hand, as I presently observed, he was fumbling in his breast, and soon, by slow degrees, I saw him draw out an immense blue cotton handkerchief, which was checked like the dusters that housemaids use—he flourished it, blew his nose, and then, more people having gathered together, he again raised his hand in blessing, and no one saw anything strange and sordid in the blue handkerchief but myself.”

“I do not think that would have offended me. The handkerchief was his own, the gems and the robes perhaps belonged to his office or to the cathedral. Still it must have damaged the beauty of the spectacle.”

“Perhaps you are regarding all this as a spectacle only.”

“Perhaps I am. I must say I feel as much repelled by the want of cleanliness, for instance, as by the crowned Queen of Heaven over the door. And that must be wrong.”

As we came to the west door and stepped out, he said, “Yes, and don’t you feel a burning desire to set it right for them—taste, and dogma, and all!! What leisure there must be up in heaven: you see God is in no hurry with them. Yet I think He will set them right at last, and perhaps we shall have to be set right too.”

“But I don’t see how we can be *very* far wrong,” was my somewhat youthful answer.

“Don’t you? no more do I. I don’t *see* it, and yet I suppose it must be so.”

“Why?”

“Well,” he answered, “when I see very plainly, as I appear to do to-day, that some other people have made mistakes against themselves; and when I feel very plainly, as I appear to do to-day, that I have made no such mistake, a thought falls down on me like a thunderbolt, that if this were the case, surely something more must and would and should come of it.”

“But we all have more light than we use.”

“Yes, and that is my answer to myself. And yet, strange to say, when we toil to do the right for God, and pray to Him for more light, we often get instead a sense of His stillness and waiting. Not an atom more certainty to go by, but a warmer and wider sense of His love, and a greater willingness to let Him do as He pleases with this world of His.”

He and Tom now agreed to go and look about them in the town; but I felt that I had not had seen enough of the cathedral, so I asked Tom to come and fetch me in an hour; and went back to engulf myself again in the stillness of that coloured shade. I had the book of the Abbé to be my interpreter, and sitting down, I opened it at the dedi-

cation, which was startling to one so ignorant of all religions but her own.

"A MARIE,

"Mère de Dieu et Dame de Chartres.

"Our fathers have dedicated to you this marvellous basilica, as the Lady of Chartres and 'Tutèle' of their city; suffer, O mighty Queen, that one of your servants may dare to dedicate to you this slight description of their immortal work, the magnificent testimony of their generous and tender devotion towards you."

Guided by this curious book, I went to look at the bas-reliefs on the quire-screen, and especially at that one which records the death of Marie, where, while St. Peter sprinkles her with holy water, and St. John tells his beads, she presents the famous chemise to her young attendant.

This garment, only second in sacredness to the so-called holy coat at Treves, is laid up in the cathedral in a golden *caise*, the Abbé informing his readers that for six centuries it has been the object of the most fervent devotions of the faithful. Then with indescribable simplicity, to the last degree curious and attractive, he next describes the sculptured scene in which eight angels, "almost trembling with respect," lift the Virgin's body into the tomb; but the Old Testament scenes, in which monks, bound books, knights in armour, and churches appear, are quite as interesting, and he seems, if one may trust his style of description, to find nothing strange in them.

I was delighting in the resplendent loveliness and purity of light and colour that came in through the glorious west window, when the sacristan came up to me again, and remarked that Monsieur and Mademoiselle could not have come on a better day, for there was to be High Mass in the evening; it would be the grandest spectacle of the year, and would close with a procession to the crypt. We should then see the *caise* in which the sacred relic was kept, four priests would bear it; also we should see the sacred banner of Chartres, with the chemise represented on it: we should acknowledge then that nothing could be more magnificent.

I remained in the cathedral till Tom and Mr. Brandon came for me, and took me to see the children and the sweet, tender old grandmother. She was giving them slices of bread and fruit, and they seemed already quite at home with her. Though she was the wife of an hotel-keeper, her manners were charming, and her thanks for the care we had bestowed on her darlings were more elegant than anything we could say in return.

We had a curious dinner afterwards, and rose from it to go into the fair and see the French soldiers, and the grown-up women riding in merry-go-rounds, and on wooden horses, with all the joyousness of children. Then, when it was nearly dark, we turned up the narrow

street that led to the cathedral and entered its great cavernous doors with the crowd that was pouring into them.

We were desirous not to show any disrespect, and yet not to be among the worshippers, so we sat withdrawn behind a pillar, but where we could see perfectly well. It was a grand thing to see twilight brooding over the crowd below, while lines of sunset yet lingered among the vaulting of the roof and behind the windows, which, growing deeper and dimmer, appeared to recede from us to a greater distance, preserving all the time a solemn splendour, till they melted into the dusk and were gone. We all had chairs, having given two sous each for them, and when two or three lamps were lighted to prevent confusion, there was a sudden clatter and flutter; all the chairs were being turned, a voice behind us caused us also to turn, and some one began to preach. "Behold, my brothers," he began, "we are now at the feet of Mary." As he preached, men on ladders lighted hundreds of little coloured lamps, which were wreathed about the pillars and festooned from pier to pier. We were seated in the wide open nave, but the roof was so lofty that I thought the crowds of people on their chairs, and round the bases of the pillars, only looked like lumps of moss and flowers growing about the roots and stems of enormous trees. The high altar rested against the great gates that shut in the quire, and while the sermon went on the functionaries lighted it up.

Again I felt the contrast between the solemn grand old nave and these paltry prettinesses.

"What does this remind you of?" whispered Tom, leaning before me to speak to Mr. Brandon.

"V.R., V.R., V.R., glittering everywhere. Isn't it just like Regent Street on the Queen's birthday?"

Miss Tott groaned when he said this. "Look at that long procession of splendour," she said; "here come the priests."

What a strange sight when one sees it for the first time, and what a strange sound was the quavering, weak chant, and the slight clatter of the censors as they were swung up smoking among the growing flowers! There was the old archbishop in his golden mitre, and womanly gear reaching down to his shoes, and all stiff with gems and orfèverrie and lace; then followed troops of ecclesiastics in scarlet and gold, and purple, and green; and then the priests in white; and then numbers of little boys in scarlet clothes and white tunics; while all the time the quavering chant went on, and the restless crowd swayed about, and long lines of delicate smoke followed the boys as they ran in and out, and men went on lighting the lamps, which were now nearly ready.

"Thrift, thrift, Horatio," whispered Tom; "there is very little oil in those lamps: they do well to light them late."

Do let me wonder at it all in peace, was my thought; but now the

organ began to play—the grand old organ in the roof that we could not see. First it sent out a few trembling, tender notes, that wandered away along the upper vaults, or dropped down upon us softly like sighs of angels, then suddenly they were all about us and among us, and we rose as if to get nearer to the music, which was pealing out the triumphal beginning of a glorious hymn.

It seemed as if some instinct had drawn us up from our seats; but we had hardly obeyed it when the organ wandered away in unexpected fashion, and we appeared to be floating among strange worlds, and to be taken out among the stars; then in a moment it flew back to its first theme, and burst upon us like musical thunder, "God save the Queen."

It was the Queen of Heaven, who is emphatically queen at Chartres.

"Do you see the cross?" whispered Mr. Brandon.

I looked and saw over the high altar a great cross formed of coloured lamps, and surmounted by a very large letter M, also of lamps. The letter M was resplendent and glorious, so that it appeared to hang suspended in the dark, so dim was the cross beneath it. The lamps had been duly lighted, but they flickered, paled, and some went out, spoiling the symmetry of the device.

"Curious accident," said Mr. Brandon; "it makes me feel quite superstitious. Strange they will not light. The Cross is utterly dimmed here by the glories of Mary."

The sight of that blazing M. and dying, fading cross gave me just the feeling he confessed to.

"If I had read such a thing in a book," he went on, "I should have said it was invented for effect; but, look, there it comes; this is what we are here to see."

So we turned, and in the distant gloom we saw that the vast old west doors were slowly swinging open, and I heard, somewhere in the gulf of darkness without, a trembling chant, while all the gorgeously dressed procession went slowly down toward these doors, and the great congregation swaying backward and forward opened for them, leaving a wide aisle; and then was such a bustle, such a moving of chairs, and such a setting of children upon them, that for a few minutes I lost sight of the priests altogether, but by the sound of their voices I perceived that they had gone outside the building.

"They are gone to meet the banner and the relic," said Mr. Brandon; "here it comes."

An endless procession of young girls, and each one with a white muslin veil over her head, and a great candle, thicker than her arm and towering far above her head. About a hundred girls passed, then came four priests, bearing on poles the golden shrine of the relic, and close behind it came the banner.

I saw a small flag of rich white silk, and on it an ordinary woman's

chemise embroidered in red, the effigy of a common garment of a usual pattern ; not, I think, like anything worn of old in the East.

Hundreds more girls followed. They were all gazing at the banner with an expression of love and reverence indescribable, and softly singing one of the litanies of the Virgin.

It was such a strange and pathetic sight that Miss Tott and I both wept. She, because its tender beauty touched her ; I, because I could not bear to think of their wasted love. And all the time the Cross flickered and went out, and I caught a petition here and there of their litany to Marie :—

Sainte Mère de Dieu
Rose Mystérieuse—priez pour nous
Etoile du matin
Refuge des pécheurs
Reine des Apôtres—priez pour nous
Reine des Anges, Sainte Mère de Dieu
Reine conçue sans péché, priez pour nous.

I had heard before careless prayers, formal prayers, and even the profane prayer of the swearer, but I had never heard anything so pathetic as this prayer, under the waning, flickering Cross, of a devout multitude who did not notice it, and all whose eyes were for the effigy on the banner.

“Did you ever see such a sight as that before ?” said Tom, pointing it out to Mr. Brandon.

“No,” he answered ; “such sights only appear to new comers.”

The banner was hoisted up and the procession halted ; but in a few minutes I observed in the gloom, which these blinking candles could not dispel, that the crowd, though no doors were open, was rapidly melting away, moving on towards a dim corner, and passing out of sight.

Tom thought they must be going down to the crypt ; and we too, when the procession had formed again, followed it on, but a good way off.

We were left nearly alone, most of the lamps were already out, and we groped our way to that corner where was a little door, through which we looked down a long flight of steps to a passage below. The steps were so worn away that we did not descend without difficulty, but once down we got into a lighted aisle. We were underneath the nave, and far beyond we heard the pathetic, unsatisfied chant of the monotonous litany. These vast old vaults were but dimly lighted, and we seemed to thread interminable lengths of them, running against the tombs of abbots, and treading in the dust of kings—no, not their dust, only the dust of their old monuments ; for the Virgin is supposed to have an objection to the presence of dead bodies, therefore none are buried here. At length, upon a sudden turn we came upon a great outburst of light, the procession, and all the kneeling

crowd! They were at the feet of a coarse wooden image, evidently very old, a frightfully barbarous mother and a still more rudely fashioned child. We stood a good deal withdrawn that we might not be seen. "How bad the air must be down here," I said to Mr. Brandon; "some of these great candles are actually going out."

"Why," he exclaimed, "you don't surely suppose they are real. You do not take them for wax?"

"They are wax, indeed. I can see it—by their hue; besides, what else can they be?"

"Excuse me, I have seen thousands of them in different parts of the world. They are tin cases, painted to imitate wax, and having a hole at the top to admit two or three inches of rushlight, which is pressed up by a spring. These stingy folks have put in such short bits that they will not last out the ceremony; that is the reason there is such a vile smell of candle-snuff."

What an extraordinary thing this seemed to do, because, as giving candles is a religious act, what was the good of making any better of them in the eyes of mortals, when to the saint it was surely supposed to be evident that they were "dips"?

The kneeling crowd began to shift, then to rise and move, and we were pressed upward with it, and, at last, reached the great, dark nave, through which wandering wafts of damp night-air were sighing. And so we were borne along to the wide west door, but we failed to find Tom and Miss Tott in the crowd, and we walked towards our hotel without them.

"What do you think of it?" asked Mr. Brandon again.

"Oh! it is very surprising; so different from what I expected; so wonderfully grand and barbarously splendid; so simply and heartily idolatrous. As a show it was lovely and pathetic; but it wanted gravity,—the people chattered softly, and the priests wanted dignity."

"Most things French want that," he answered. "Those priests never walk well, and the people were not awed; they were too much amused to give one the idea that they felt they were assisting at a solemn, religious service."

"It is very odd, that, apart from any religious reason, I am deeply disappointed. I expected to see such deep reverence. Do you know I felt afraid to go and see it, lest I should be drawn to it too strongly."

"And now?"

"Now I hardly know what to think! Certainly I am not attracted. Surely it was theatrical, and to a certain extent unreal."

"The music was fine," he answered. "Not so fine as you would have on a high day at Westminster Abbey, or at York, or at Durham (Cathedrals that I happen to know best); but still it was fine. And surely you did not expect English solemnity from a French priest; and English sobriety from a French crowd?"

"Yes, indeed."

"I have often seen French women praying before some shrine with a most touching expression of reverence and love ; but I have not seen elsewhere that hushed and reverent quiet and that tender awe with which an English congregation comes up to receive the Holy Communion."

"I thought to see that in perfection."

"I think you never will, at least I never did. I do not know of any solemnity to match the silence in an English church followed by the low voice of the clergyman when he partakes himself of the sacred elements, before he gives them to the people."

"But I felt that the show was too cheap. Some things meant to be grand were sham."

"They are not so rich as we are."

"No ; but with us shabby, old pulpit clothes and pewter communion plate only means that the worshippers are poor, or unob-servant ; here it means that they are undutiful."

"Many people would have been delighted and astonished with what we have seen. It was, at least, pathetic, though it seems to me that its chief pathos was for us. To me it seemed one of the grandest and most sublime sights I ever beheld, for to all that gorgeous colouring and barbaric adorning, and those pale trailing drifts of incense smoke, through which one saw the old men's and the children's faces, was added the certainty that not a soul among them was conscious of the tragical withdrawal into darkness of the sacred sign. It was hidden from their eyes."

We turned as he spoke, and looked back at the exquisite spires, and looked earnestly, for this was to be our last view of them. When we reached the hotel we found our boxes already brought down into the courtyard ; the carriage was waiting which was to take us to the railway, for we were to return to Havre that very night. Tom and Miss Tott were in it, our bill was paid, and we were soon in our places in the railway carriage, feeling very tired, but too much excited to sleep.

I was sitting lost in thought, and feeling as if in a dream, when we stopped at a station, and Miss Tott, sighing, laid her hand on my arm, and said,—

"You have been gratified, I hope—and you, too, Mr. Graham?"

Tom nodded.

"No doubt we have all been interested," said Mr. Brandon ; "but no two of us have seen the same thing. You and I have seen what we looked for—a common case ; it is often difficult to see anything else. Miss Graham has accomplished it, and seen something startling."

"I have seen something superior to anything I could have hoped," she answered. "Something far finer than my fondest dream. I

saw kneeling faith and adoring love ; and those flowers, how lovely they looked in the lamp-light. And you, Mr. Brandon, did you, could you see anything different ? ”

“ Yes ; there is no use in denying it. I saw lamps that we hire on illumination nights at sixpence a dozen. I heard bad chanting, and I smelt bad oil ; but you know the town-clerk at Ephesus said of Paul that he was not a blasphemer of the goddess.”

“ Oh ! what can you mean by such an allusion as that ? ”

“ I’m not sure that I know ! It only occurred to me that I should like to follow that example.”

“ But I think the town-clerk lied,” observed Tom.

“ And I think not. I think that while showing the more excellent way he was very careful not to be rude or disrespectful. There is all the grace and courtesy of the East in that speech at Athens.”

“ And you actually were not impressed ? ” cried Miss Tott.

“ No ; but I do not complain. I saw what I looked for, and what I went to see.”

“ He paid two sous for his chair,” said Tom ; “ and he thought that was what the show was worth.”

“ But Miss Graham saw something remarkable—something unexpected.”

Miss Tott, whose hand still lay on my arm, looked at me with tender interest, and said with conviction, and also as if she would persuade me to acknowledge my feelings,—

“ She was impressed, I am sure. Yes, I saw that she was overpowered.”

“ I am sorry,” was my answer ; “ but how could I help it ? I expected to see what you described, but I was obliged to see something more like what Mr. Brandon looked at.”

“ You will never buy such a sight for two sous again,” he replied.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ O Kate, nice customs curtesy to great kings.

Henry the Fifth.

WE dozed when we could that night, but were all very tired when we reached Havre. My uncle had established himself at Wheeler’s Hotel, and gave us a grand breakfast there before we went on board, which we did about twelve o’clock, all feeling weary, especially poor Miss Tott, who went to her berth directly, and began to be ill before we were out of the harbour. It rained hard all the afternoon till dinner-time, which was about five o’clock. We, that is Tom and Mr. Brandon and myself, had each taken a book, and pretended to

read ; but a gentle snore soon told me how Tom was occupied, and Mr. Brandon's book shortly after fell on the floor with a thump that startled him, and he picked it up, making a remark on the lurching of the vessel, which I roused myself to hear, but presently resigned myself to circumstances, and slept sweetly till Brand came in to make preparations for dinner.

Then we all went to our peculiar dens to dress, and my uncle sent me by Mrs. Brand a pretty brooch that he had bought for me at Havre—an opal set in gold, and surrounded by turquoises. I put on my best dress, and otherwise adorned myself so as to do it honour, and could not help wishing that I had remembered to bring him something from Chartres. I wished it the more, when after dinner Tom produced some eau de Cologne and presented it to him, and Mr. Brandon brought out the neatest of cigar-cases. Dear old man, he was pleased, and, looking with pride at his own choice of the brooch, entered into a long discussion with Mr. Brandon relative to the cost of the said brooch, in which the latter displayed a good deal of knowledge as to the ornaments worn by ladies, and the proper sums to be given for them.

He produced two brooches which he had bought for his sisters—the only presents he was going to take home to his family; for all his effects had gone down in the ship, and they chiefly consisted of natural curiosities. “I felt a sudden wish to come home,” he said, “but I had spent so much money that I could only return in a sailing vessel, unless I would wait till my stepfather could send out more to me. I did not care to do that, so I sailed from Charleston, and you know the consequences.”

In the evening, when lamps were lighted, and I was sitting alone in the chief cabin, writing a letter to my sister, he came in and said abruptly, “I am going to-morrow, Miss Graham.”

He sat down near me.

“You know we agreed some time ago that your going was to be a loss to me,” I replied, “though now that your arm is so nearly well——”

“Exactly so ; but, as I am going, will you accept one of these brooches in memory of the raft and everything else?”

“What !” I exclaimed, “when you expressly told us that you bought them for your sisters?”

We both laughed. “I could give her something else,” he said ; “but you cannot write while you are talking. I wish, then, you would close your letter-case.”

“Why ?”

“Because I cannot help seeing your opening words where I sit—
‘My dearest Amy.’”

I closed the case. “And about these trifles,” he continued, “I should be so much flattered if you would choose one.”

He had added a third,—it lay beside the brooches on the table, a pretty ring, set with pearls.

"This," he said, taking it up and laying it on the palm of his hand, "has not the disadvantage of having been chosen for some other person."

"Ah, you chose it for me, that was kind; but is it the custom for gentlemen to make presents to ladies?"

He looked astonished at my question, which made me feel that he must think it an odd one; then he smiled to himself, and answered after a pause, that it was not the custom, excepting under special circumstances.

Observing that he seemed a little out of countenance, and knowing how ignorant I was, I actually thought I ought to apologise for the implied supposition that he had done what was not customary, and I began to say something of the sort when he hastily checked me.

"You are perfectly right—perfectly. It was only the simplicity of your question that took me by surprise. As a general rule, ladies do not accept presents, nor do men presume to offer them. And yet," he said, looking at my hand with a sort of regret, "you go wandering about the world so much, that my good stars may never guide me across your wake again; and I thought that perhaps, without presumption, I might offer you this tiny thing to remind you of a little episode in your life, which will bear reflection."

"It is for the visionary hand, is it not?" I could not help saying, for I had often seen him look at my hands with an interest that nothing else in me appeared to excite.

"Yes," he answered.

"Then I will have the ring. Thank you."

He handed it to me gravely, and I put it on my little finger; after which we began to talk of Chartres and the children and the days we had spent together—pleasant talk which lasted till tea came in, and with it Uncle Rollin and Tom.

We were within four or five knots of Southampton when I went to sleep that night, and the last thing I saw was one of the lights on the Isle of Wight.

Poor Miss Tott insisted on being on deck all night, thinking it was better for her; so I had my cabin to myself, and had just finished dressing the next morning, when Tom knocked at the door, and I called him in.

He had a fine bunch of flowers in his hand, and gave them to me.

"Well, Brandon's off," he said. "I went on shore with him, and took leave of him."

"Mr. Brandon gone?" I exclaimed.

"Yes," said Tom, looking a little disconcerted, "and I bought you these in the market."

"Gone without wishing me good-bye?"

"How could he do that when he left before you were awake?"

"Why did he leave, then, before I was awake? I think it was very strange—very. Yes, I think it was very rude of him."

"You seem to make the matter of great importance," he muttered. "The fact is I was obliged to land early myself, and I told him I was sure you would be far from wishing him to stay behind on purpose to take leave of you (he has not seen his stepfather for nearly two years). So on that assurance he was glad to leave a message and go."

"I should have been sorry if he had stayed out of mere civility to——"

"So I said," interrupted Tom.

"Civility to me; but most people would not have wished to do such a thing."

"You need not be so warm, Dorothea; it was not all my doing, though I admit that I thought it a good arrangement."

"Indeed, and why?"

"Well, if you must know, I wished to spare you from betraying a degree of interest which he would not know what to do with, and does not reciprocate."

"Tom!" I spoke vehemently; I was so astonished and so indignant.

"And it seems," continued Tom, who then looked uncomfortable—"it seems that I was right, for you make the fellow's going of vast consequence."

"Tom, will you look at me?"

I was so angry that I could not bear him to keep turning away his face, and my whole nature was roused to assert itself against his strange interference.

He brought his eyes to meet mine. "Come," he said, "if you really do not care for Brandon, there is no harm done."

"Yes, there is. You speak as if I had really—as if I had actually behaved with unlady-like—I mean, with unwomanly forwardness."

"I have no such thought: I only know that you take an interest in him."

"Of course, I do; I ought, and shall. Who ever heard of that being made a fault?"

"What business had he," said Tom, "to tell me all about his income, and say that he found it abundant so long as he did not want to marry, and he thought a man was much freer and happier single?"

"I dare say it came out in the ordinary course of conversation."

"But why care so much about the matter?" repeated Tom.

"I care that you should mistake me so thoroughly, and that you should think you have a right to interfere. I do not care that Mr. Brandon is gone without shaking hands with me, now I know that you contrived it."

"An elder brother is generally supposed to have some rights."

"Oh! Tom, you were older than I long ago; but I am a woman now, and you are but a youth."

"Very well, then," still crest-fallen and abashed; "if you are neither in love with him, nor angry at his manner of going, we had better drop the subject."

"In love!" I repeated with scorn. "He never paid me the slightest attention."

I thought I had answered him, but he replied,—

"What has that to do with it? Besides, what is attention?"

I was a little posed, never having received any, or seen any paid; but I could not appear so to Tom, so I said that it was being absorbed in watchful observance and interest in another person.

"Then Brandon paid none. (I'll put those flowers in water, or your warm hand will fade them.) Then, he or she who pays attention may love its object, or may not (decidedly may not); for I have seen some paid which" (he poured water into my fixed vase, and put the flowers in it)—"which I am expressly told implied only a natural and proper degree of interest. There, if you will change the water daily, they will last some time."

He went out, quietly shutting the door behind him, while I stood stockstill in a whirl of agitation, with which mingled some fear lest Mr. Brandon might have guessed his reason for proposing to dispense with a leave-taking, and a little regret at this unceremonious departure.

It was true certainly that he interested me, but so he did others. Uncle Rollin had taken to him from the first. Tom liked to hear him talk. Mrs. Brand was his open admirer; why then all this alarm because he excited the same feeling, and none other, in my mind? At first, when left alone that fine morning, I felt frightened, thinking that I must have behaved foolishly; but more mature reflection made me certain of the contrary, and, remembering Miss Tott's presence in the yacht, I hastened in to breakfast, eyes sparkling with the remains of excitement, head a little higher than usual, and mind bent on proving that my spirits were far from depressed by the departure of our guest.

Though we were within fifty yards of the pier-head, and in perfectly still water, Miss Tott would not venture below; so when I had seen her, pale but hungry, enjoying a substantial breakfast under Mrs. Brand's auspices, I began my own.

Uncle Rollin complimented me on my appearance almost as soon as he came in. "Such a colour in your cheeks, my dear! The sea suits her, doesn't it, Tom? One would hardly know her for the little white-faced thing that came on board from Ipswich. Hungry this morning, eh? that's well. And so Brandon's gone—a good fellow, a fine fellow; never sailed with a better."

"No, uncle; but you are not sorry to be alone, I dare say."

"I don't say that exactly. I did not at all mind him ; he never interfered with my comfort."

"But now he is gone, can't I have my lessons more regularly?"

"Ay, to be sure, to be sure ; I'll give you one directly after prayers."

I took my lesson ; it lasted only an hour, but I felt as if it never would be over. At last I was released and went quickly into my cabin, almost tumbling over Tom, who was sitting in the doorway. He caught me in his arms, and held me while he pushed the door to with his foot, and then he kissed me and said, "You're not angry, Dorothea?"

"I have been angry."

"You are not now ; I did not mean any harm."

"I don't think I am—particularly angry."

"Well, I am sorry ; give me a kiss. I really am sorry."

So I kissed him, and we were reconciled ; but, alas ! sad mischance, no sooner had he left me alone than this new turn of affairs utterly subdued me. I felt how cross I had been to Tom. His seeking a reconciliation of his own accord softened me. Even then I had many regrets about him, and some fears for his future ; and now he was gentle and anxious to conciliate. So I was touched, and began to shed tears. I cried and sobbed too, partly at Tom's humility, but partly because I was vexed with Mr. Brandon, and also sorry that I should never see him again.

Well, it was a great pity, but I could not help it. I had cried myself happier again, dried my eyes, and reached that stage of return to common feelings when one goes to the glass to see how red one's eyes are, when Tom knocked again, and came in exclaiming, "Oh, Dorothea !—but what's the matter ? You've been crying."

I did not say anything.

"Could anything be more unlucky ? Here is Brandon come on board again. The fact is he said he should."

"Oh, I cannot see him now, Tom ; I cannot possibly. He would see that I have been crying. Oh, do devise some excuse."

"You won't see him. Oh, Dolly, you must ; it would look so odd. What is to be done ? it's all my fault."

"He must be asked to stay luncheon."

Tom said he would go and press him to stay, but he came back saying that it could not be done ; Brandon had brought his step-father on board, and could only stay a quarter of an hour.

While he was away on his errand I had felt that, after all Tom had said, I could not possibly let Mr. Brandon see the least appearance of regret in my manner, lest he should attribute it to sorrow at his departure ; and I thought sincerely enough that I would much rather not see him at all than be seen with the traces of tears on my face, and I actually trembled at the notion of en-

countering him. I had no veil but the one that I had laid over the dead baby ; so when Tom said I must come on deck, I snatched up a bonnet (there was some shade in a bonnet then), Tom put a scarf on for me, and I had a brown parasol.

He came on deck with me and whispered, "All right, hold the parasol well over you."

I saw somebody's legs, and a voice belonging to them said, "Miss Graham, I am glad to see you again."

I shook hands mechanically, but kept the fringe of my parasol fluttering over my eyes till I found that an introduction was going on between me and somebody else. "Allow me—my father." Now I was obliged to look up, and I saw a very aged gentleman standing beside him, a most venerable man with snowy hair. He took off his hat and paid me some trifling compliment, then he told me that he had come down to Southampton to see his son, who had written him word when to expect him.

I said, "I am so sorry my uncle is not on board."

"I regret it much," he replied. "I should have liked to thank him for his goodness and his hospitality ; but I hope to see him and you, and you also, lieutenant (addressing Tom), at my house. My daughter and Brandon's sisters will be most happy, most proud to make your acquaintance."

Such a charming old man I have seldom seen : he was half a head taller than his son, who was little above the middle height ; and as he stooped towards me and paid his compliments, then turning, laid his hand lightly on the shoulder from which a sling for the injured arm depended, there was a grace and suavity in his manner, a cordial affection in his expression of gladness at having him home again that I could not admire enough.

As he talked Mr. Brandon regarded him with satisfaction, and I thought it was evident that he had come on board, not only that his father might express his obligations to my uncle, but that he might show us a relation of whom he was evidently so proud.

He seemed to be about eighty years of age, had a radiant smile, and could attract everybody. Mrs. Brand was charmed ; the sailors obviously revered his old white head that towered so much above theirs.

He went over the yacht with Tom and his attentive son, and I, meanwhile, stood gazing towards Southampton, watching the green weeds which the rising tide was slowly washing backwards and forwards, but not thinking of them. No ; my thoughts were very uncomfortable. I was ill at ease, for when my eyes had met Mr. Brandon's, an intelligent look had leaped out of his : he saw, I knew he saw, that I had been shedding tears, and his cordial manner had changed instantly to one of restraint and even of embarrassment.

So I gazed over the vessel's side at the old wall of Southampton,

and the weed, and the Jersey steamer, just in, and letting off her steam in shrill jerks of sound.

At last Mr. Brandon came up the companion, stepped to my side, and lifted his hat.

"We are going now, Miss Graham, Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

"What shall I wish you? Another patient, I think, since you are so skilful."

"What, another! when I have found the present one quite beyond my management."

"I wish, then, that the next may be less refractory."

"In that case I may echo the wish."

"And less troublesome, and as grateful."

"I must not expect such a paragon. Good-bye; a pleasant journey."

"And if, when he goes away, he gives you a ring, don't wear it."

"Why not?"

"Because it would be very unfair, if you wore *that fellow's ring*, and not mine."

He laughed, and glanced at my hand; true enough, his ring was not there, and I felt tempted to tell him that I was wearing it, notwithstanding, for it was in the little locket round my neck; but I resisted the temptation, and now the aged stepfather was making his adieux, and so with smiles and mutual compliments, offers of hospitality, jokes, and thanks we all parted.

"My uncle will be very thankful to have missed all this gratitude," said Tom, looking after them as they kissed their hands in the boat. "How that fine old fellow talked—as if Brandon was anything better than another father's son! Well, Dorothea, your eyes are tolerable now: shall we go ashore, order a fly, and take a drive among the fields?"

I knew he proposed this for my amusement, and I had been quite long enough at sea to think of fields with delight, so I agreed; and when we had taken leave of Miss Tott, who was going to town by the next train, we set forth, and he was so affectionate and kind all that day that I forgave him, over and over again, for what he had said in the morning. Besides, I had seen Mr. Brandon; his joyous laugh, and air of pretended malice when he talked of *that fellow's ring*, had done me good, and restored my self-respect; for now I thought, though he saw tears, he had also seen that I was not wearing his present, and my apparent carelessness of it has not hurt him,—only amused him.

(To be continued.)

